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MARY BELL

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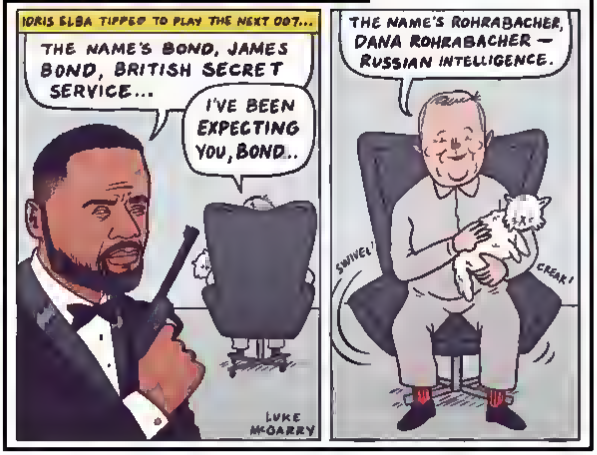
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MUSIC EDITOR Nate Jackson
FOOD EDITOR Cynthia Rebollado
CALENDAR EDITOR Aimee Murillo
EDITORIAL ASSISTANT/ PROOFREADER Lisa Black
CONTRIBUTING WRITERS Dave Barton, Joel Beers, Sarah Bernard, Lillede shar Bese Mary Carreon, Josh Chesler, Heidi Darby, Stacy Davies, Alex Distefano, Erin De Witt, Jeanette Duran, Edwin Goei, Candace Hansen, Daniel Kohn, Dave Lieberman, Adam Levinus, Todd Matthews, Greg Nagel, Katrina Nattress, Nick Nuk em, Anne Marie Panoringan, CJ Simonson, Andrew Tonkovich, Brittany Woolsey, Chris Ziegler
EDITORIAL INTERNS Liana Blume, Savannah Muñoz, Spencer Otte

EDITORIAL ART
CONTRIBUTING ARTISTS AlGas... Leslie Agan, Bob Aul, Jared Beggess, Mark Dancey, Rob Dobi, Jeff Drew, Scott Feinblatt, Greg Houston, Cameron K. Lewis, Sill Mayer, Luke McGarry, Kevin McVeigh, Thomas Pitilli, Joe Rocco, Julie Salgado
PHOTOGRAPHERS Wednesday Aja, Ed Carrasco, Brian Ezzell, Scott Feinblatt, Brian Feinzimer John Gilhooley, Eric Head, Nick Iverson, Allix Johnson, Matt Kollar, Isaac Larios, Danny Liao, Fabian Ortiz, Jesus Rivas, Eran Ryan, Sugarwolf, Matt Ulfelder, Miguel Vasconcellos, Christopher Victorio, William Vo, Kevin Warn, Micah Wright

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ART DIRECTOR Richie Beckman
PRODUCTION MANAGER Casey Long
LAYOUT DESIGNER/PRODUCTION ARTIST Mercedes Del Real

SALES
PUBLISHER Cynthia Rebollado
SALES DIRECTOR Ryan Whipple
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PRESIDENT & CEO Duncan McIntosh
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AR COORDINATOR Harlinda Ortiz

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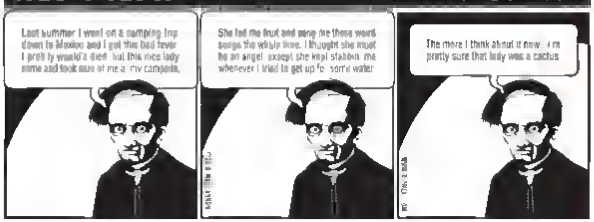
RED MEAT

glistening spleen in the soup tureen

from the secret files of Max Cannon


Last summer I went on a camping trip down to Mexico and I got the bad fever. I prob ly would'a died, but this nice lady came and took care of me a nd my campanero.
She had the fruit and sang me these words songs the whole time. I thought she must be an angel, except she kept stabbin me whenever I tried to get up fo some water.
The more I think about it now, I'm pretty sure that lady was a cactus.

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A Whole Canyon of Crazy

What the lamestream media doesn't want you to know about the Holy Fire

BY LIAM BLUME

Shortly after 1 p.m. on Aug. 6, cabin 15 on Trabuco Creek Road burst into flames. By 7 p.m., approximately 1,200 acres of the Cleveland National Forest had burned. Cabin 15, owned by a man named Frank R. (authorities had not released his full name as of press time), was the first of 14 cabins that have been destroyed by the Holy Fire. (Although cabin address numbers range from 1 to 62, there were never more than roughly a dozen dwellings.) One of the few cabins left standing in Holy Jim Canyon was owned by Forrest Gordon Clark.

The felony complaint against Clark says the Holy Fire was sparked when Clark set fire to Frank R.'s cabin.

Clark was arrested outside of his cabin the next morning while wearing only a pair of camouflage skivvies, a golden medallion the size of a grapefruit around his neck, and a pair of black sunglasses. According to the OC Sheriff's Department, Clark resisted arrest but was quickly detained. He has since been charged with six counts—three felony arsons with malicious intent, felony criminal threats against the aforementioned Frank R., and two felony counts of resisting arrest. After refusing to attend his initial arraignment, Clark appeared in OC Central Court on Friday and screamed that he would pay his $1 million bail "easily. I'll take care of that right now."

It is important to note that residents of Holy Jim are typically suspicious and private in nature. The community itself is reminiscent of a mid-20th-century Kentucky town deep in the hollows of Appalachia. Homes here run on propane generators, and access to the nearest grocery store is via a winding, 5-mile dirt road that washes out during the rainy months. In winter, the canyon is only accessible by four-wheel-drive vehicles with high clearance. The canyon attracts people who want isolation and rally around their own in times of trouble. In its solitude, conspiracy theories spread through the canyon like a summer fire.

Clark's neighbors hold two viewpoints of him. One is that he is a neighborhood loon whose conspiracy theories make Alex Jones look like Walter Cronkite. Clark, they say, has threatened his neighbors for years and claimed he would burn the canyon down in an email to Holy Jim Volunteer Fire Department Chief Mike Milligan. This is the Forrest Gordon Clark the lamestream media wants Orange County to know about.

But there is another view of Forrest Gordon Clark, a misunderstood town crier whose outlandish opinions are as true as they are crazy. To those with this opinion, Clark is revered as a prophet of doom and a harbinger of redemption. As Matt Coker pointed out last week, this "White Trash Jesus" may be a patsy in a scheme far larger than he could handle.

JACEN CARPENTER

"I saw a white pickup leaving the canyon. It was moments after that [that] I saw smoke," said a Holy Jim resident whom we'll call Mrs. Doe. (Both she and her husband have lived in the canyon for 20 years and agreed to speak with the *Weekly* on the condition they remain anonymous.) "I tried to tell the police about the pickup, but they wouldn't take the testimony," she said.

"He made threats against people in the community, so they're building a case against him," said Mr. Doe. "We have every reason to hate Forrest, but he's innocent until proven guilty. All this stuff that's been put out is to shift the entire narrative against Forrest. The district attorney does this stuff all the time; I've witnessed it firsthand."

Clark told police he was asleep at the time of the fire. According to the Does, Clark's alibi is plausible and reinforces the theory that Clark has been framed in order to silence him. "I just know that Forrest and Frank had this Hatfield-and-McCoy thing going on," said Mrs. Doe. "It was easier for Frank to push Forrest's buttons than it was for Forrest to push Frank's. For years, Frank had been telling us, 'That guy's crazy!' We didn't know anything about that because Forrest was always nice to us. I know there's a lot of tension between Mike Milligan, Frank and Forrest. That thing was lethal, so we just stayed out of the politics."

The Does say Forrest was volatile but had a soft side. "He was very kind when he was kind," said Mrs. Doe. "Last time I saw him, he gave [Mr. Doe] a hug. That was his little way of apologizing."

According to the Does, Clark—who claims he fears the MS 13 is after him, telling news crews the international gang planned on sending "eight big Mexicans to kill him"—may have been telling the truth. They speculate that Clark pissed off an offshoot of the cartel by reporting on their expansive covert activities in the remote canyon, that Frank and Milligan set fire to cabin 15 to frame Forrest; or that the fire is a ploy by DA Tony Rackauckas to get re-elected and run a secret sex-trafficking ring.

Though Clark seems like a lone freedom fighter turned fall guy, the Does say he is not acting alone. "Forrest had been trying to rope me into his terrorist militia for years," said Mr. Doe. "They're an anti-government group. They're gonna bring down the government. They have their own economy, their own army, and they're taking over. They've been saying the whole block of downtown Santa Ana by the jail and the Civic Center is gonna go up in smoke. It's all rigged to blow! I've been listening to this for years."

Mr. Doe believes that the white truck his wife witnessed speeding past their home may have been an anti-militia truck and that this new organization may have been working in tandem with either MS 13 or the district attorney's office and Milligan to start the fire.

Despite the Does' insistence that Clark is innocent until proven guilty, they do have their doubts about their neighbor's character. Mrs. Doe recounted an incident with Clark a few months back in which she was physically threatened. "Forrest was in the trees trimming branches when I drove up in my car," she recalled. "When I moved the branches he'd been dropping in the road, he was furious. He got in his Jeep and drove right at me." Mrs. Doe says she narrowly escaped a collision with Clark's Jeep that day and that this wasn't their first run-in with the man.

"As time went on, we just thought to ourselves something wasn't right," she continued. "Frank would tell us Forrest was cutting our water lines, but we just figured it was [because] they had a beef. But now, looking back, we're not sure."

Elvis Castillo, a Holy Jim resident who was struck by Clark when he was a teenager, recounted how Clark's suspicion was deadly. Clark accosted Castillo when he and some friends (including my brother) were barbecuing outside his parents' home in 2014. Clark accused the boys of trying to start a fire. The boys denied the accusation but extinguished the fire. Clark wouldn't let it go, however. He told the fire marshal about the incident and began taking pictures of the boys. Castillo retaliated by taking a picture of Clark. "That's when he kicked the phone out of my hand," Castillo said, adding that Clark pulled a shotgun on the boys and threatened to use it.

OC Sheriff's deputies responded, handing Castillo an infraction for igniting a fire 25 feet from a building. Clark was let off with a warning.

As the *Weekly* previously reported, Clark had sought habeas corpus for mental health issues in the '90s, been arrested for domestic violence and elder abuse against his mother (who subsequently filed a restraining order against him), and has been caught forging his car registration.

It seems likely that Clark—who was recently detained in a psychiatric hospital—set the fire. Whether the Does' theory about the white truck is true, or whether Clark and Frank R.'s feud finally combusted disastrously, it's certain that the Holy Fire smoked out the conspiracy theorists.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

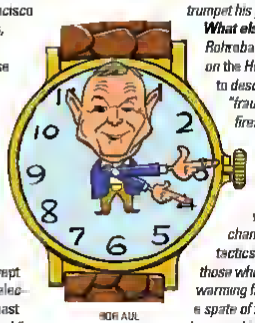
Clone Wars

» MATT COKER

Representative Dana Rohrabacher (R-Putin's Pearl Necklace) is the most endangered "Trump clone" in Congress.

That's the opinion of *Mother Jones* magazine's Dan Spinelli, who on Aug. 9 unveiled a "guide to the Trumpiest lawmakers in Washington—and how likely they are to lose."

According to the San Francisco based magazine's publishers, "*Mother Jones* was founded as a nonprofit in 1976 because we knew corporations and the wealthy wouldn't fund the type of hard-hitting journalism we set out to do." Spinelli—an editorial fellow in *Mother Jones*' D.C. bureau who covers environmental policy and national politics, rates 13 members of the House by "how likely they are to be swept away" in the Nov. 6 general election, "in (rough) order from least vulnerable to most endangered."



BOB AUL

Which brings us to the excretion of Spinelli's *numero uno*.

1. Rep. Dana Rohrabacher (R-Calif.)

Who is he? *A 15-term congressman from California, former speechwriter to former President Ronald Reagan, and reportedly "so valuable" to Russian intelligence that the Kremlin gave him a code name. Rohrabacher's passionate defenses of Russia were so widely known that House Majority Leader Kevin McCarthy (R-Calif.) once said privately, "There's two people I think Putin pays. Rohrabacher and Trump." (After a recording of the comment surfaced, a McCarthy spokesman said it was a joke.)*

Does it concern him that he is seen as so close to Russia? *Apparently not. Just last week, Rohrabacher told Mother Jones that anyone in "this town" would have done what Donald Trump, Jr. did—that is, accept a meeting with a Russian emissary promising dirt on a political opponent. Despite his past history as an ardent cold warrior, Rohrabacher has used his recent tenure as chairman of the House Subcommittee on Europe, Eurasia and Emerging Threats to trumpet his pro-Russia views.*

What else is he known for? *Rohrabacher has used his perch on the House science committee to describe global warming as a "fraud." In a state where wildfires have become a routine, destructive occurrence in the summer, Rohrabacher has pushed back on the connection between worsening fires and climate change. "This exemplifies the tactics—the scare tactics—of those who've been pushing this global warming fraud on us," he said during a spate of fires in August 2013. "They'll take something that is dramatic, like a fire, and try and use that, or a tornado, or a hurricane, and say, 'See, people are being hurt.'"*

Will he be reelected? *Once considered to be in a safely Republican district, Rohrabacher's seat is now listed as a "toss up" by the Cook Political Report. A July Monmouth University poll found Democratic challenger Harley Rouda with a slight edge over the longtime congressman.*

Find the full list at: www.motherjones.com/politics/2018/08/trumpiest-members-congress-jim-jordan-devin-nunes-chris-collins-dana-rohrabacher/

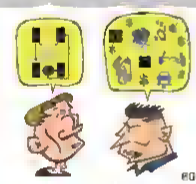
Got Dana Watch fodder? Email mcoker@ocweekly.com.

HeyYou!

» ANONYMOUS

Draw Your Brakes

You rathe guys with the sharp haircuts in the North OC shop where I went to get my tires rotated. You threw in a service inspection and presented me with a list of things needing repair or replacement, namely brakes ("down to 2mm"), struts, brake fluid and a worn serpentine belt. You delivered this news with an underlying sense of urgency, as if I were prepared to wait the extra time it would have taken to have this done. I felt a bit wary, so I said, "Thanks, I'll have it looked into." A few days later I took the car to my regular mechanic (who has regular hair) to follow up on this, and after inspection, he found yes, the serpentine belt was in need of replacing, but all of the other stuff you almost seemed to be pressuring me into doing right then didn't need to be done. He educated me about uneven wear in brakes. Other things he simply dismissed out of hand. In fact, he said he'd heard similar things about your shop—to which, by the way, I won't be returning.



BOB AUL

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THE GREAT PARKING LOT

The Orange County Great Park is huge, perfectly manicured and beautiful.

SO WHERE'S THE ACTUAL PARK?

By Anthony Pignataro

It's sunny and about 80 degrees out when I find a map for the Orange County Great Park. I've been walking around the massive Irvine landscape for the past 30 minutes, trying to take it all in, but the map holds a surprise I didn't find in any of the websites, brochures or blog posts I read to prepare myself for this visit. "Reflecting Ponds." The day's getting warmer by the minute, and standing over some cool ponds sounds sublime.

According to the map, the ponds sit at the end of the "Kaiser Permanente Thrive Path" (there's no better way to transcend your troubles than by walking on a paved walkway named for a multibillion-dollar HMO, right?). The "Path" parallels acres of soccer fields and a parking lot, and after a few minutes, I finally arrive at my destination: two giant dirt holes near the intersection of Marine Way and Ridge Valley that are cordoned off. The construction workers ignore me as I snap a few photos, then walk away.

Under construction for more than a dozen years, the Great Park today is a strange place. Even now, the attractions (such as they are) are only open four days of the week, and Irvine officials have no plans to change that any time soon. Some parts of the park, such as the famous big orange balloon ride (once free, now $10 per person), are more than a decade old. But nearby, recently opened baseball fields are so freshly landscaped they smell like the Home Depot Garden Center. There are many places to sit but few spots to relax, given the fact the Great Park has virtually no shade trees (walking around the entire Great Park one day, I did find one huge, old tree, but it was fenced off and inaccessible). Many of the benches are also what Mike Davis described in *City of Quartz* as "bum-proof"—built with large bars in the center to prevent people from lying down on them. And when I finally did find a nice, regular bench to sit on that was partially in the shade, it was very close to the carousel (a hand-me-down from Fashion Island in Newport Beach), which at that moment was playing the Chipettes' version of Beyoncé's "Single Ladies."

The Great Park is also—and this is clearly a product of its former life as a jet base—still covered in concrete and asphalt. That means the Great Park can get warm, like a stovetop. Some of this material has been cleverly reused, such as the portions that were ground up and used to shore up earthworks near the balloon ride. But in other cases, great slabs of concrete were simply left where they were, including the taxiway that's now an immense "Historical Timeline," complete with entries such as "1492. Christopher Columbus Crosses the Atlantic, Jews & Muslims Expelled from Spain."

All of this makes sense when you think about the difficult way in which the Great Park has come about. Though the city of Irvine annexed the Marine Corps Air Station (MCAS) El Toro many years ago, homebuilder Lennar Corp. actually owns most of it (the company bought the base in a 2005 Department of Defense auction for nearly $650 million). Much of the park today owes its life not to Irvine planners, but to FivePoint, a development company largely funded by Lennar. As for the city, it's almost comical now to calculate how many millions of dollars it threw down the hole known as Forde & Mollrich, all while city officials were claiming they couldn't pay to build the park (the payments to the PR consultant finally ended in 2013).

Even today, contractors and consultants swarm over the Great Park. Irvine has its own designers as well as contract work from AECOM. FivePoint—which designed and built 688 acres of sports fields that are nearly complete—has consultants of its own. In May, the Great Park Board of Directors (which these days is made up of just Irvine City Council members) hired the consulting firm HR&A to help bring tenants into the park's 250-acre "Cultural Terrace," which is still being designed.

But honestly, the park—or, at least, what many of us imagined the park would be—was doomed when Lennar bought the base. Sure, the Great Park is what the 2002 Measure W mandated for the former Marine Corps base, but *park* can mean a lot of things. Lennar builds big, expensive homes, and that's why it paid so much for the base.

Go up in the Great Park Balloon now, and you'll see all the homes Lennar has been building—thousands of them, not one of which is cheaper than $600,000 (assuming you can find one for even that price). The Great Park, or rather most of

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 10

THE GREAT PARKING LOT

» FROM PAGE 9

what has been built so far, pretty much exists to boost the property values for the people moving into the vaunted "Great Park Neighborhoods."

This makes sense when you look at FivePoint. Six of the eight members of its "Executive Team" are white males (and one of those is Steve Churm, who used to publish the *OC Metro*, which printed nothing but gospel about Orange County companies; today, Craig Reem, Churm's former editor, is the city of Irvine's spokesperson). This is exactly the kind of development team that would think securing a major HMO to sponsor an asphalt walkway is a world-class idea.

Sure, the Great Park has or will have many, many baseball, softball, volleyball and soccer fields—and one shiny new soccer stadium that could easily find use in a future Olympics—but given that just 25 percent of the population plays organized sports (according to a 2015 Harvard study), how much use are these fields going to get?

Of course, looking down from the balloon, there's no question the Great Park has a certain beauty: the grid of trees in the Palm Court and the assorted arrows, angles, umbrellas and checkerboard patterns between the old hangar and the Visitor Center are laid out like some sort of Instagram art project, but I can't say it all adds up to comfort and relaxation. The Great Park is something to behold, but it's not really a park—a reality that has many residents so concerned they've spent the past year lobbying the city to build a truly lush park at the Great Park.

The real tragedy here is that the promise of the old MCAS El Toro—encompassing more than 5,000 acres—was breathtaking. Its 1999 closure was a chance to turn an imperial war-making fortress that had sent untold thousands of young Marines to fight and die in the Pacific, Korea, Vietnam and Persian Gulf into a place of peace and tranquility, a refuge from militarism and consumerism that would benefit the general public.

My recent visits to the Great Park took place two decades after I last set foot on the base. Back in 1998, I was a young reporter on a media tour of the MCAS El Toro. We watched aviators strut across the flight line while the metallic whine of F/A-18 Hornet fighters filled the air. Though base activity was winding down (it would close altogether the following summer), the station was still very much operational.

At that time, the county was tearing itself apart over the proposal (backed by right-wing billionaire George Argyros) to convert the base into an international airport. Look at all the South County neighborhoods that popped up over the past decade like mushrooms after a storm to see the fallacy in that idea—every new homeowner was a wealthy (or at least well-off) family with multiple cars, disposable income and an unutterable loathing of even the talk of putting a massive international airport in their back yards.

Anti-airport activists—and this paper—had a better idea. City of Irvine mailers in 2002 said its Great Park proposal would be a "true oasis" and "America's greatest park." Then-Mayor Larry Agran told the *Weekly* the park would comprise "2,800 acres."

"It will be twice the size and every bit as beautiful as San Diego's Balboa Park," Agran said. "The good guys are going to win."

Believe me, we take no satisfaction in the fact that we called bullshit on all that back then. For us, the Great Park wasn't just a tactic to beat back the hated and unnecessary airport—it was a chance to provide everyone in Orange County a refuge from the traffic, stress and growing misery of everyday life. It was to be beautiful, quiet and, above all, public—a place to walk, sit, reflect, or just lie on your back and watch butterflies and fluffy clouds. Even if it couldn't make life better, the park certainly wouldn't make it worse.

For a while, it looked as if the Great Park would be great. In 2007, the park's board approved a master plan designed by Iowa architect Ken Smith, whose vision for the Great Park mirrored what those of us who had fought so hard for a decade earlier.

"In the heart of Orange County a new kind of park is being created, one where visitors experience a new kind of relationship between the built environment and the natural world," stated Smith's master plan. "As parks have long been, the Great Park is an oasis, a place of pleasure, activity and reflection. But it is much more. It is a place that connects our history and our current needs, knitting together the communities of Southern California while restoring the region's natural heritage. It is a place where new ideas for social and environmental sustainability are investigated and tested. The citizens of Orange County are key participants in imagining these new ideas to create a healthier and more sustainable future."

It was a wonderful thought—grass, trees, water and even a 60-foot-deep canyon that stretched across the property. But it never came to be. Though the city of Irvine approved the plan, the cost was simply seen as too high. Smith's master plan just went away.

Hey, big, beautiful parks are expensive. They cost money, and cities today don't have a ton to throw around on the public good. A 19th-century city such as New York could build a huge public expense such as Central Park because that's what governments did back then—they raised taxes and spent money. But we're in the 21st century, and that means cities are mired in crushing debt (remember, Flint, Michigan, still doesn't have clean drinking water).

Given municipal politics in Orange County today, there's no way the Great Park can just be a public park, anymore than the 261 toll road could be a "freeway." Damn thing's gotta be self-sufficient—it has to make money, which is why a giant ice rink is going in now, the ink's drying on a new agreement with Wild Rivers for a water park, and the city just hired a new consultant to find revenue-generating tenants for the upcoming "Cultural Terrace" portion of the park, which is still being designed.

It took about 16 years to build New York's 843-acre Central Park. If you're generous and start from the year Lennar bought MCAS El Toro, then we're in Year 13 now.

Remarkably, there's still a chance Irvine might put an actual "park" in the Great Park. It's not a sure thing, and even if successful, it won't be big. But there's a move-

PHOTOS BY RICHIE BECKMAN

ment to convince the city of Irvine to add a botanical garden.

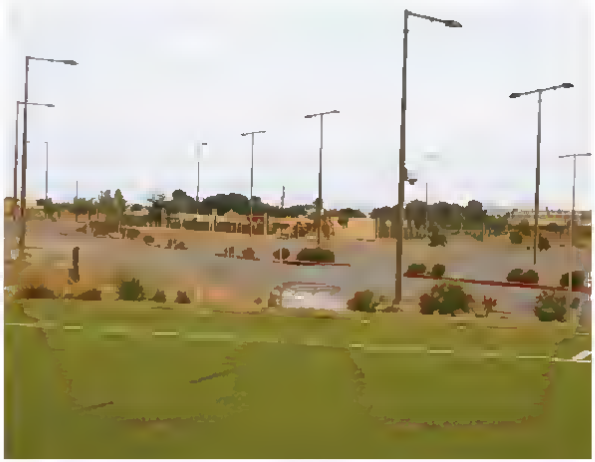
"Our organization is dedicated to saving 59 acres for a botanical garden in the Cultural Terrace," Irvine resident Teena Spindler told me. Last year, Spindler and other Master Gardeners such as herself formed the Great Park Garden Coalition, after discovering the botanical garden they had assumed would be built at the Great Park—because it was prominently featured in Smith's master plan—wasn't actually part of the city's new plans (the gardeners also run the Great Park's 1-acre Farm + Food Lab, which is a nice place if you're into gardening and fresh, locally produced vegetables and such).

Soon, gardeners and garden-lovers were emailing the Irvine City Council, practically begging for a tiny sliver of the Great Park. "Would you please put the 59 acres back into the development plan?" Laguna Woods resident Evelyn M. Chase-Miller asked in a May 22, 2017, email to the City Council. "We need a garden that reflects the beauty that our wonderful Southern California climate creates. . . . As our natural world disappears around us, we need to have a place to visit and take in the restfulness of a native garden/botanical garden."

OC resident Courtney Havens agreed, writing a letter to the council the same day as Chase-Miller. "One of the things I enjoy most about visiting other cities is visiting and exploring garden spaces," Havens wrote. "Gardens are an important part of public spaces, they allow spaces of peace in the middle of urban sprawl."

For its part, the Garden Coalition crafted its own proposal, which it submitted to the Urban Land Institute (ULI) for a possible grant. But the grant didn't end up happening, and ULI officials didn't respond to my request for their reasoning. In any case, the Garden Coali-

» CONTINUED ON PAGE 12



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THE GREAT PARKING LOT

» FROM PAGE 11

tion plan keeps alive the old vision for the Great Park many thought had died with Smith's master plan.

"The Great Park Botanic Garden is not your traditional botanical garden," states the coalition's plan. "It's a garden for the 21st century an 'experiential' garden. This garden is not a static, boring place to house plants with scientific labels, it's a place of experiences with walking/jogging paths though native forests and wildflower meadows, a children's garden of discovery and active learning; a place where art and music exists within and throughout the garden, where the many cultures of the residents of Orange County can be celebrated and shared through plants and design, and so much more."

Such a garden would also be very popular with county residents, according to the city of Irvine's own research. In fact, the city's Great Park Planning Survey, which was submitted to the Great Park Board in May 2017, says a remarkable 82 percent of county residents are "very or somewhat interested" in the construction of botanical gardens at the park.

PHOTO BY RICHIE BECKMAN

While all this sounds lovely, city officials haven't yet officially agreed to it. And as to when they will decide, Irvine spokesperson Reem couldn't say. "This is the largest parkland development in the country right now," he said. "There's no timetable for that. There's an awful lot of work in other parts of the park."

Such as the baseball fields that just opened up. Or the mile-long trails stretching from Irvine Boulevard to the soccer stadium that will open "this calendar year," though Reem couldn't be more specific.

In July 2017, AECOM published a report on a potential botanical garden at the Great Park. But don't get your hopes up. The study mostly just ran the numbers on the garden's estimated cost and projected financial benefits.

According to the AECOM report, a 59-acre botanical garden at the Great Park would cost at least $50 million to build. It would require an additional $3.6 million in annual operation costs, while bringing in just $1.8 million in annual revenues.

"Botanical gardens can be very successful cultural attractions that bring hundreds of thousands of visitors to a destination, provide extensive community programming and serve as event venues," the report stated. "They are typically operated as nonprofit organizations in partnership with a public agency, and while they can generate earned revenue that covers a portion of operating costs, they also require contributed income or public subsidy on an annual basis. They also require a substantial upfront capital investment and typically require time for plantings to develop until they can grow into a full-scale visitor attraction that reaches their attendance potential."

Hence the city is focusing on putting a golf course and Wild Rivers into the Great Park. In the meantime, at least a few city officials seem to see great value in something more lush and tranquil than a giant water slide.

For this story, I emailed all five members of the Irvine City Council, asking if they supported a botanical garden at the Great Park. No one responded. But at the May 23, 2017, Great Park board meeting, Director/City Councilwoman Christina Shea called a botanical garden "a really key component of the Cultural Terrace."

And in a recent constituent newsletter, Great Park Director/City Councilwoman Melissa Fox said that, "I will also insist that we follow the recommendations of residents and build world-class botanical gardens, museums and a lake to make Irvine the home of a truly Great Park."

But most heartening, on May 22, Fox pushed back on the notion that everything in the Cultural Terrace must generate a lot of revenue.

"The Cultural Terrace is the Cultural Terrace," she told Irvine planners and consultants at the Great Park board meeting. "Not the Commercial Terrace."

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MATTHEW MURPHY

fri/08/17

[CONCERT]

ROCKABILLY RULES!

Stray Cats

Rockabilly is not dead! As the summer winds down, and just after the OC Fair ends its season, the godfathers of the rockabilly revival movement, Stray Cats, will be strutting their stuff at the Pacific Amphitheatre. Join Brian Setzer, Lee Rocker, and Slim Jim Phantom as they trot out some of their classic numbers, such as "Runaway Boys," "Rock This Town," and, of course, "Stray Cat Strut." Tonight the Cats will be joined by the Paladins. If you've never seen this legendary trio perform, you're in for a treat; just make sure you're ready to bop around the dance floor!

MORE » ONLINE OCWEEKLY.COM

Stray Cats at Pacific Amphitheatre, 88 Fair Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 708-1500, pacamp.com. 7:30 p.m. $45-$85. —SCOTT FEINBLATT

[FILM]

Batter Up!

A League of Their Own

OC Parks Sunset Cinema film series continues its summer blitz, bringing family classic films to the big screen in Yorba Regional Park. This Friday, root for your favorite knuckleballers, fielders and baseswomen in director Penny Marshall's hit sports comedy *A League of Their Own*. Inspired by the true story of the first all-female professional baseball league, this Golden Globe-nominated film was selected for preservation by the Library of Congress in 2012 for being culturally significant—and that's not just for Madonna's aces swing dance performance with Eddie Mekka (Carmine from *Laverne & Shirley*). There are chills, spills, there's Tom Hanks, and there is no crying (well, not much), so join this all-star cast and let them rough and tumble you through the last month of summer fun—real, live bruises included.

A League of Their Own at Yorba Regional Park, 7600 E. La Palma, Anaheim, (714) 973-6615, www.ocparks.com. 8 p.m. Free. —SR DAVIES

sat/08/18

[FOOD & DRINK]

SPICE WORLD

California Hot Sauce Expo

Day one of this weekend's 4th Annual California Hot Sauce Expo includes tastings, beer and cocktail chasers, unlikely chile-inspired programming and the requisite enthusiastic hyperbole demanded of connoisseurs of this high-temp culinary niche, with part of the fun apparently appreciating not just the cuisine, but its high-larious appellations. You could sample, for instance, Hallacious, Tears of the Sun, Foo Foo Mamma Choo or hundreds of other sauces of all traditions, some with wine, citrus, curry and all with rankings on or way off the Scoville scale. Visit the Stage of Doom, take the Slaytanic Burrito Challenge and stay for the Chihuahua beauty contest.

California Hot Sauce Expo at City National Grove of Anaheim, 2200 E. Katella Ave., Anaheim, (714) 712-2700, cahotsaucesexpo.com. 10 a.m., also Sun. $10-$75. —ANDREW TONKOVICH

[FESTIVALS]

Find Us At . . .

Viva! Pomona

The headliners are always worth it at the Viva! Pomona festival, and this year it's the extremely loved Surf Curse and Palm on Saturday, and the also much-loved Marias and Shannon Shaw (of Shannon and the Clams) on Sunday. But Viva!'s undercard is bristling with action, excitement and unpredictability, with one of the most cheerful imaginative rosters on the festival circuit. Peruvian-psychedelic chicha crew La Chamba, who put out the great *Ecos de La Selva* last year, or cumbia-fusion outfit El Santo Golpe or R&B heartbreaker Girl Ultra or [illegible] really, don't miss anyone if you can help it! Funday brings E Arenas of Chicano Batman, whose solo work is humming with intensity and inspiration, as well as Tijuana's expansively psychedelic San Pedro El Cortez and Suicide-style synth punkers Prettiest Eyes—so looks like you'll be at this both days, won't you?

Viva! Pomona at the Glass House, 200 W. 2nd St., Pomona, (909) 865-3802, www.theglasshouse.us. 4 p.m., also Sun. $25-$40. —CHRIS ZIEGLER

sun/08/19

[FOOD & DRINK]

Sweet Treats

Plum Festival

Sure, we've got lobster fests and taco fests aplenty this summer—but we dare you to find one food festival steeped in as much loving tradition as Old World Village's annual Plum Festival. It all started with Elly Schwarzer, who would bake her daughter, Delores, a plum cake for her birthday each August. The duo traveled to Germany on vacation in 1939 and got stuck there for almost a decade while war raged on. Eventually, they ended up at Huntington Beach's Old World, still making plum cakes each year. Elly made her last at age 100, at which point the bakers at Old World took on the recipe. The family lost Delores in 2015, but the Plum Fest goes on, honoring the ladies' memories each year.

Plum Festival at Old World Village, 7561 Center Ave., Huntington Beach, (714) 895-8020; www.oldworld.ws. 2 p.m. Free. —ERIN DEWITT

[FAMILY EVENTS]

Old School Fun

Bob Baker Marionette Theater

Bob Baker's painted puppets have enchanted generations of children since the 1960s, and continue to do so years after the beloved puppeteer has passed on. While you can (and should) head out to the original theater—which is now a 501(c)3 and is currently planning for some renovations to update its look—Bixby Knolls hosts a couple of free Marionette Theater events for all age groups. Join in on the fun today (and again on August 26) at the historic bandshell at Bixby Park for an afternoon of marionette entertainment, and indulge in this treasured Los Angeles institution once more with your own kiddies.

Bob Baker Marionette Theater at Bixby Park, 130 Cherry Ave., Long Beach, www.friendsofbixbypark.org. 11 a.m., also Aug. 26. Free. —AIMEE MURILLO

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mon/08/20

[CONCERT]

Take Them!

Takers Leavers

OC-based post-hardcore band Takers Leavers are taking the stage Monday nights as part of their Wayfarer residency. Opening for them tonight are SoCal-based electro-metal group the Black Hand, whose singer Chris Hughes was formerly a professional BMX rider until a devastating accident ended his riding career, prompting him to follow his musical dreams. Many of the Black Hand's output addresses Hughes' personal struggles. The Band Ice Cream from San Francisco brings a punky, garage rock & roll sound, with enough fuzzy, lo-fi guitar to satisfy rock enthusiasts in the audience.

Takers Leavers with the Black Hand and the Band Ice Cream at the Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarerem.com. 8 p.m. Free. 21+. —AIMEE MURILLO

tue/08/21

[PERFORMING ARTS]

Behind the Rhythm

On Your Feet!

Based on the incredible but true life story of Gloria and Emilio Estefan, *On Your Feet!* is a powerful new musical currently touring the nation and making a two-week jaunt at Segerstrom Center for the Arts. The Cuban couple, who met while performing for Miami Sound Machine, broke through on the American music charts with hits like "Rhythm is Gonna Get Ya." Learn all about the couple's struggles through this immersive song-and-dance production, which embeds the same energizing multicultural beats and sounds the Estefans brought to generations of fans.

On Your Feet! at Segerstrom Hall, 600 Town Center Dr., Costa Mesa, (714) 556-2787, www.scfta.org. 7:30 p.m. Through Sept. 2. $29–$109. —AIMEE MURILLO

wed/08/22

[MUSEUM EXHIBITS]

HANGIN' TEN 'Women Making Waves'

Being that Orange County has an extensive surfing history, it makes sense it would host an array of museum exhibits celebrating it, from the ways the sport has influenced street culture to its pioneers. San Clemente's Surfing Heritage and Culture Center currently offers a women-centric exhibit that examines how female surfers were always among the earliest wave (pun intended!) of trailblazers, helping shape its history and culture as much as the men. Immersed in the images you'll learn names of surfers (such as demigod Mamala, perhaps the first female surfer from the Hawaiian Pacific, where the sport was born) and their backgrounds and accomplishments. You'll even familiarize yourself with the women surfers who are rocking their toes on the nose today.

"Women Making Waves" at Surfing Heritage and Culture Center, 110 Calle Iglesia San Clemente, (949) 338-0313; shacc.org. 11 a.m. Through "the end of August," according to the website. $5 —AIMEE MURILLO

[CONCERT]

The Unheard Music X

At this point in their career, no one would be upset if illustrious Southern California punk pioneers X were happily retired. After all, in July 2015 guitarist Billy Zoom was diagnosed with bladder cancer before returning to the stage later that year—the band's legacy is undeniable, as is their rigorous work ethic. Having just celebrated their 40th anniversary with an extensive tour last year, the band is keeping a busy tour calendar, with shows across the country scheduled through the beginning of September. Despite not having released any new material outside of a few stray singles and TV syncs in years, X remains a popular draw on the road and will probably continue to dazzle crowds in the years to come.

X at Marty's on Newport, 14401 Newport Ave , Tustin, (714) 544-1995, www.martysonnewport.com. 9 p.m. $40. —WYOMING REYNOLDS

thu/08/23

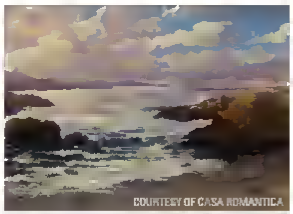
[ART]

Treat Your Senses

Art, Jazz, Wine & Chocolate

As the summer seems to be winding down to a close, so is the Festival of Arts, with only a couple of weeks left to enjoy all the art and fun the Festival offers. The weekly Art, Jazz, Wine & Chocolate night brings four of the most marvelously wonderful things to ever exist together in one relaxed social setting, giving you a chance to indulge in some wine and chocolate pairings while checking out a chill jazz concert. Tonight, the L.A. Collective plays an outdoor show, and patrons are encouraged to bring their own picnic (see the house rules on the FOA website first, though). And of course, absorb the visual splendor of the Festival of Arts exhibits. Ah, to be a patron of the arts!

Art, Jazz, Wine & Chocolate at Festival of Arts Pageant of the Masters, 650 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-6582, www.foapom.com. 5:30 p.m. $35, wine and chocolate pairings, $20 —AIMEE MURILLO



[ART]

BAJA BLAST 'The Art of Baja California'

Three artists—Juan Angel Castillo, Esau Andrade Valencia and Benito Ortega Vargas—explore the rich, vibrant imagery evocative of the Baja California region through their individual mediums and sensibilities. Each artist approaches the subject matter with his own distinct style, from Vargas' poetically rustic sculptures that bring in elements of classic Greek mythology to Valencia's folk paintings of Mexican iconography rendered with saturated color to Castillo's beautiful plein-air landscape paintings. This exhibit is officially in the last few days of its run, so come see this treatment of the Baja region through marvelous magical realism and artistic storytelling.

"The Art of Baja California" at Casa Romantica Cultural Center and Gardens, 415 Avenida Granada, San Clemente, (949) 498-2139; www.casaromantica.org. 11 a.m. Through Aug. 25. Free with $5 admission —AIMEE MURILLO

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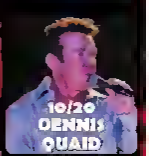

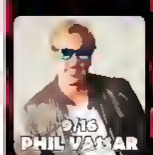

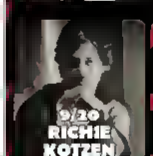

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8/25	HONK
8/27	AMANDA SHIRES
8/30	MIDGE URE AND PAUL YOUNG
8/31	COMEDY NIGHT
9/1	WILD CHILD
9/2	THE ENGLISH BEAT
9/7	JUSTIN HAYWARD
9/8	THE HIGHWAYMAN SHOW
9/9	GIN BLOSSOMS
9/14	THE ATOMIC PUNKS / WAYWARO SONS
9/15	OESPERAOO
9/16	PNIL VASSAR
9/20	RICNIE KOTZEN, VINNIE MOORE, GUS G
9/21	NERMAN'S NERMITS FEAT. PETER NOONE
9/22	NERMAN'S NERMITS FEAT. PETER NOONE
9/23	STRUNZ ANO FARAN
9/26	TESLA
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9/29	TNE SWEET
9/30	FUNNIEST NOUSEWIVES - AMERICA'S GOT TALENT
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10/7	TNE GUESS WNO
10/12	JO SOUTNER
10/13	TNE BABYS
10/19	BASIA
10/20	OENNIS QUAIO ANO TNE SNARKS
10/25	TAB BENOIT
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10/27	BEE GEES GOLO THE TRIBUTE
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11/9	AMERICA
11/10	AMERICA
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11/14	THE WIND AND THE WAVE
11/15	TNE KINGSTON TRIO
11/19	JONN MAYALL
11/17	AN EVENING WITH RICNIE FURAY

UPCOMING SHOWS

11/19	MICNAEL TOMLINSON	12/6	JONNY LANG
11/20	AN UNPRENISTABLE EVENING WITH TOOO RUNOGREN	12/7	JONNY LANG
11/21	AN UNPRENISTABLE EVENING WITH TOOO RUNOGREN	12/6	LEO ZEPAGAIN
11/29	BANO OF FRIENDS (A CELEBRATION OF ROSY GALLAGHER)	12/14	GARY No No NOEY
11/30	OSB	12/15	ROBERT CRAY
12/1	WHICN ONE'S PINK?	12/29	QUEEN NATION
12/2	OWEEZIL ZAPPA	12/31	BEATLES VS STONES
12/5	SQUIRREL NUT ZIPPERS	1/17	TNE MAGPIE SALUTE
		1/16	TOMMY CASTRO
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Don't Hate the Playa...

Wild Goose Tavern owners open Playa Mesa, hire the sous chef from Taco María

BY EDWIN GOEI

The first thing I noticed upon walking into Playa Mesa was its pastel-colored warmth. Since I knew the restaurant was the latest from owners Mario Marovic and Andrew Gabriel—the partners responsible for the Country Club and Wild Goose Tavern—I wasn't expecting it. Their style is more dark and slightly claustrophobic.

In contrast, Playa Mesa feels vibrant and vast, as though one of Georgia O'Keeffe's New Mexican watercolors leapt off the canvas. The ambiance was so out of character for the pair that I likened it to the first time I heard REM's "Shiny Happy People," that oddly cheerful track no one counted on from the group that produced "Losing My Religion."

But in interviews, Marovic's intentions for Playa Mesa were clear from the get-go. Unlike his usual 21-and-older venues, he wanted this restaurant to be a family-friendly place, "where the kids can eat, and mom and dad can get a killer margarita."

That Friday night, I did see a few kids, but not many. It seems that no matter how much money the partners sank into turning a former Ruby's Diner into this shiny, happy alternative to El Torito, the same nightclub and bar crowd that Marovic and Gabriel courted with their previous ventures had followed them here. Nearly everyone who arrived came dressed to impress. A majority were twenty- and thirtysomethings with clubby tops and designer purses. It was as though *Riviera Magazine* was hosting a casting call.

For sure, this is the hottest restaurant to see and be seen in Costa Mesa right now. As such, I don't know whether families would find the place all that accessible. Reservations are booked weeks out. And if you walk in without one, you'll be waiting an hour or trolling the bar for a spot to open up. As at Marovic and Gabriel's other concepts, most of the crowd is concentrated around the bar, but here you get a free basket of chips and a bowl of salsa as soon as you sit down.

The man responsible for the food is Roland Rubalcava. Marovic and Gabriel hired him fresh from a stint as sous chef at Carlos Salgado's Taco María. But Rubalcava's reputation was arguably set way before he started working under Salgado. His family owns La Reina markets, and up until he sold it to jumpstart his career as a chef, Rubalcava owned Rubalcava's Bakery, which was renowned for its tortillas.

So it comes as no surprise that Rubalcava makes a pretty good taco for Playa Mesa. I'm not sure if the tortillas Rubalcava builds them upon came from the same family recipe as his bakery's, but they're thick, warm and soft as blinis—all of it hand-pressed by a woman whose job it is to do so continuously on a slowly spinning comal seen behind a window into the kitchen.

As good as Rubalcava's carne asada tacos are—which come two per order and garnished with a slice of avocado, some cilantro and pico de gallo—I questioned whether they were the right thing to order. I knew after having the food at Taco María that Rubalcava is capable of much more than this, and looking down at my seemingly pedestrian rice-and-refried-beans combo plate made me think it was all beneath him.

As if to answer the call, the aguachile arrived. For it, Rubalcava uses sushi-grade scallops that he shelters under cucumbers, microgreens and cubed avocado. But the star, as is always the case, is the sauce. Formulated with lime juice and serrano, it zaps your tongue and causes your jaw muscles to involuntarily contract upon contact. Although I found it a touch too syrupy and only slightly hot, Rubalcava's aguachile is the closest you can get at Playa Mesa to eating electricity.

I would recommend ordering it or the coctel de camaron—or, in fact, any of his ceviches—as a starter instead of the sope. Despite being generously topped with perfectly refried beans, soupy shredded beef and pickled onions, the sope is foiled by a masa cake that's as hard as concrete.

For a main course, you could live large with a plato fuerte, entrées centered on a protein that culminates in the "Plato Del Patron," with roasted jidori chicken, spare ribs, steak and an army of sides for $50, or you can do what most people do: Settle for a taco combo plate or, better yet, an enchilada. The best of these is the enfrijolada.

@OCWMKTGDIRECTOR

Sprinkled with crispy rendered chicken skin and deep-fried epazote leaves, then served next to Spanish rice and a bracingly bitter arugula salad, Rubalcava's enfrijolada is a chicken-stuffed enchilada whose tortilla is enrobed in a black bean purée instead of a red or green sauce. And it's a great dish—something that instantly puts Playa Mesa on a higher plane than El Torito. No, it's still nowhere near the level set by Taco María, but then, what is?

PLAYA MESA
428 E. 17th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 287-5292, www.playamesa.com. Open Mon.-Fri., 11 a.m.-11 p.m.; Sat.-Sun., 9 a.m.-11 p.m. Starters, $7-$19, entrées, $13-$50. Full bar.

WHAT THE ALE
» GREG NAGEL

Star Wars Day Is Back!

A few days from now, in a city far far away (San Clemente), the beer flowing through Pizza Port's beer taps will be pumped full of sweet sweet Jedi juice and the pizzeria-pub will transform into a mock Mos Eisley Cantina. For the seventh year in a row, the 15-year-old Pizza Port is back with "It's a Tap!" *Star Wars* day complete with a special intergalactic beer menu worthy of a Darth Vader feeding tube — seriously, how does Vader even drink ales? No wonder he's crabby.

From previous years, most guests tend to wear *Star Wars* T-shirts, shorts, and flip-flops, but don't be surprised to see some Halloween costumes get dragged out for the event. Occasionally a truly great cosplayer comes out of the woodwork, like a Princess Amidala of the Nabooze, Darth Malt, or even Han Solo Cup.

For the ultra-fans, trivia is always fun and full of beery prizes, and the Wookiee impersonation contest is always hilarious.

In the past, featured beers included: Nerf Herder English mild/brown ale, Boba Fett IPA, Red Leader Rebel Red, May the Port Be With You Imperial Porter, General Grievous Bourbon Barrel Aged Imperial Porter, Banthe Poodoo Scotch ale/wee heavy, Luke Sky Guy Pale Ale, Where's My Light Saber, Irish stout, Delusions Of Grandeur IPA, "I've Got a Bad Feeling About This," American imperial stout with habaneros on cask, Dark Forces Baltic porter, and Hop Vader black IPA.

Don't come solo, not even you—Han.

THE SEVENTH ANNUAL STAR WARS IT'S A TAP! at Pizza Port, 301 N. El Camino Real, San Clemente. Sat., 11 a.m.-11 p.m.

ANDREA MACHUCA

Eat+DRINK 2018 OC WEEKLY

YOUR GUIDE TO OC & LB'S BEST RESTAURANTS

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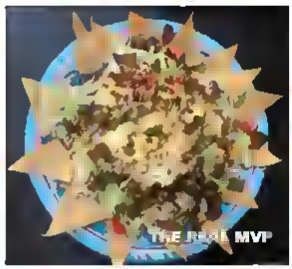
Always wear your seat belt and please don't drink and drive.

Working-Class Eats

Long Beach's past, present and future MVP's Grill & Patio



SARAH BENNETT

LONG BEACH LUNCH
» SARAH BENNETT

I still don't understand how I fell into food writing. Was I the only person in Long Beach who never cooked because their apartment is so old that if you wanted a fridge, it had to go where an oven was supposed to be? Besides loving my city immensely, was I qualified at all to shift my storytelling urges from music and art to whatever I could afford to put on my plate?

For some reason (*gracias a dios*), former *OC Weekly* editor Gustavo Arellano emailed me during the summer of 2012 a single question: "Any interest in doing Long Beach restaurant reviews for me?"

And so, nearly every week for the past six years (minus a year-long hiatus during which I defected to run the food section at the *LA Weekly*—RIP), I have reviewed a Long Beach restaurant; interviewed a local chef; or commented on an event, neighborhood, genre or dish—hundreds of pieces in all.

All this isn't to humblebrag (I swear), but to instead explain why I've been thinking about how much has changed, not only my understanding of food (and its connection to culture, to memory and to nourishment), but also within Long Beach's restaurant scene (which is growing at a clip, with about one new opening a week).

For the anniversary of this column, I decided to meditate more on what we already have—by going back to the first place I reviewed for Long Beach Lunch, the inimitable MVP's Grill and Patio.

As with the city's food scene itself, some things are different at MVP's, but its working-class soul remains. There are now three locations of the locally famous sports-themed charbroiler, each since independently owned and with its own quirks. MVP's earned its cred at its original location, a shack and patio built into the front yard of a Craftsman house on Fourth Street in Belmont Heights. It opened in the late '90s and for years served a small list of girthy burgers and hot dogs cleverly named after such sports figures as George Foreman ("The Champ's favorite") and Pat Day ("a winner by a long shot"). The Cajun fries, heavily dusted with piquant seasonings and served in hefty portions, may be the city's answer to Hot Cheetos (check your fingers when you're done).

A longtime employee purchased the business and its recipes, then started expanding. The menu grew to include buttered-sourdough sandwiches (The Ditka is a turkey sammie "for Bear-ish appetites"), two-meal salads (the Oscar de la Hoya has carne asada and spicy ranch) and additional meaty burgers (a Mike Tyson comes with double patties, pastrami, jalepeños and Swiss). Then two new locations opened, first in the suburbs, then down the street from the original.

The farthest flung MVP's is on Stearns and Bellflower, in a former Tastee Freez. It's little more than an A-frame walk-up with some destruction-proof tables outside. But it's the only MVP's that makes its own tzatziki sauce, a refreshing, garlick-y condiment that should be ordered either on a gyro pita (Mait Pappas) or a chicken pita (Greg Lougaris).

In 2013, MVP's took over Porky's BBQ on 10th and Redondo, another walk-up window with a few tables outside. But since detaching from the original owners at some point in the past few years, the quality at this location has severely declined; wait times are long, and the food sometimes comes out sloppy.

If you can, it's best to stick with the original, which relocated in 2015 to a glossier, roomier spot down the street, replete with a private back patio, indoor seating and a door that connects the counter directly to one of the diviest dive bars in town. It's the last MVP's still owned by the man who invented most of the menu—a pilgrimage every local should make. (It's also the only MVP's where you can go to watch a sports game.)

A lot may have changed in the city's food scene over the past six years (and a lot more may still be changing), but Long Beach is still the kind of place where a hundred chef-driven farm-to-table restaurants can open up around you, but your neighborhood charbroiler will still be one of the best meals in town.

MVP'S GRILL & PATIO
2742 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 439-0809.

PHOTOS BY GREG NAGEL

Farm to Fork

The Ranch's tomato splendor

EAT & DRINK THIS NOW
» GREG NAGEL

I often refer to my daughter as my little Pygmalion, sometimes for the classic George Bernard Shaw play reference, but as her escargot shot from her tongs and hit my cocktail during dinner, the term took on a totally new meaning. You see, the movie *Pretty Woman* with Julia Roberts and Richard Gere is a modernized version of the hundred-year-old play, and the scene where Julia Roberts' character shoots an escargot shell across the restaurant was incredibly serendipitous.

"Slippery little suckers," I said, quoting *Pretty Woman*, attempting to ease her embarrassment. I took a sip of my yellow watermelon margarita and continued my litany of dad jokes. "Shooting shells and a peach drink, what is this, Super Mario Kart?" I didn't get a laugh, but her shade of red seemed to fade from beet red to blonde, nearly matching her heirloom beet salad, which happens to be an incredible mix of greens, red flame grapes, Dr. Seuss-like Chioggias, and little hunks of Spanish manchego ($16). "I didn't even know I like beets," she said after her first bite.

Sure, the Ranch is probably known for their hunka-chunka $118 bone-in Cowboy Ribeye, which seem to fly out of their kitchen like bulls at a rodeo, but I'm here because it's officially tomato season, and from what I understand, the Edwards Ranch Estates farm that grows most of the veggies in the restaurant is engulfed with 26 heirloom varietals of the colorful summer fruit.

I went with the Edwards Ranch Estates heirloom tomato salad, a dish that breaks my self-imposed rule of "never photograph a salad." But here I am, light in one hand, camera in the other, snapping photos of this tomato carnival like some sort of Goop.com food correspondent. Nuggets of Point Reyes Blue Cheese, smoky housemade barbecue bacon, and farm-grown basil make this a meal on its own.

My first time at the Ranch I was a little confused about the vibe, being that it's located in a corporate electronics building. Although the interior feels like it could be at a resort in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, the placed wine glassware and cases of select bottles decorating the dining room are a constant reminder of what the real agenda is: pair your meat with whatever the sommelier suggests. What if you're having neither?

Sten Green, the restaurant manager, also happens to be the force behind their bar program and often uses and infuses items from the farm. The Rosy Peach cocktail is as bright, balanced, and is as fruity as they come. Although George Bernard Shaw once said, "Whiskey is liquid sunshine," the Rosy Peach is probably the next best thing.

THE RANCH
1025 E. Ball Rd., Anaheim, (714) 817-4200,
www.theranch.com

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To Out or Not to Out

Should dead movie stars stay in the closet?

BY STACY DAVIES

Outing celebrities is a history fraught with debate. Over the past 30 years (and certainly before), gay and straight publications engaged in the practice fairly regularly, albeit with different aims. For hetero news, outing was tabloid fodder, salacious and good for newsstand pickups (of papers, not twinks). For gay publications, the goal was more about visibility, and there was a certain bitterness attached to it. Here were famous stars such as Jodie Foster, whom the collective "we" of the LGBT knew were gay, but who refused to come out to the straight world. During those decades, if gays were represented in media at all, it was mostly as stereotypes—the news only glimpsed fringe groups from pride parades, and in film, gays were depicted as twisted perversions such as serial killer Buffalo Bill in *Silence of the Lambs* or the psycho-sexual lesbians of *Basic Instinct* and *Poison Ivy*. The LGBT community couldn't get comprehensive news coverage or positive fictional characters, so they looked to the giants of their group to come out and show the world that most of us were average, decent people whose lives span the spectrum.

These days, many actors have chosen to come out themselves, and with each revelation, there's a cavalcade of outraged whiners who scream, "Who cares?!?"—but this isn't a cry for equality, as in "it shouldn't matter" (which is true), but rather the new way of saying, "I don't want to know this, keep it to yourself." In short, it's the new "stay in the closet."

In 2012, Scotty Bowers, a self-proclaimed "handler" of Golden Age celebrities, published a tell-all book about the covert sex lives of some of Hollywood's most iconic figures. As it turns out, they were not all straight-arrow shooters, but often fell somewhere else on the spectrum—gay, lesbian, bi or queerly fluid. While many LGBT welcomed these revelations about stars they love, a peanut gallery of boo-hooers decried the outings as deplorable, with even Barbara Walters on *The View* yelping that these people are dead and could not "defend" themselves. Because gay is bad and something that needs to be defended against.

The release of Matt Tyrnauer's new documentary *Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood*, based on Bowers' book and reviewed for *OC Weekly* by Aimee Murillo, has brought those advocates for the closet to the comment sections on reviews and Twitter. Even in the doc itself, a man proposes to Bowers at a book signing that the grandchildren of these dead stars might be adversely affected by the gay outing, to which Bowers responds, "What's wrong with being gay?" The man does not have a response—at least not one that's included in the film.

COURTESY OF VICTORIA PRICE

Finding out that Patricia Neal and Gary Cooper had a long-term affair (while both were married to other people) makes classic-movie fans swoon, but finding out that Vincent Price and wife Coral Browne were pansexual and in an open marriage is blasphemy. It also apparently requires Robert Mueller-level "proof" beyond the corroborations of folks who knew them well, which Bowers includes in his book (and Price's daughter Victoria confirms in her own illuminating essay). You must prove gay, but you don't need to prove straight, as it turns out.

Believing that idols of yesteryear were not their screen personas in real life seems to be a giant leap for many fans, even though they're aware of the morals clauses actors were forced to sign and that coming out or outing anyone meant certain career destruction. As if we don't all know that the arts always attract more LGBT people into their ranks than, say, banking or construction.

Bowers made a point not to write his book until almost all of his friends were dead, and his tell-all tales are pretty vanilla sexcapades. More often than not, they're just stories of regular one-night stands. He's not claiming these stars murdered anyone, after all, and offers no dark episodes that might accompany modern headlines—no pedophilia, no rape, no abuse.

Instead of greeting this news with lament that idols are being smashed, why not see it for what it is. Sad. Helpful. One of the most powerful segments in Trynauer's documentary is the footage from raids on gay bars that took place at the time—raids that threw men and women into police vans, often resulting in lost jobs, families, even lives.

These dead stars suffered addictions in their closets, as well as violence and isolation, yet they still got up and did their job, still gave us the fantasy we wanted, both on and off the screen. Imagine the terror Rock Hudson had to endure—and the subsequent humiliation he faced when he could no longer hide his secret and had to wither away before our eyes from AIDS. The shame Kate Hepburn, who, by all accounts, was impossible to shame, must have felt regarding her own nature. How sad for them. How sad for us. It's also helpful. For the LGBT, it's further representation in history and culture. For straight people, it offers understanding of the lives of LGBT, both throughout history and today.

Is Bowers, a wiley little gnome with a taste for the lurid, the ideal messenger for such revelatory information? Of course not. But, it seems he's the only one who's talking, and one can only wonder if the dead stars—if they are, indeed, floating around in some ethereal afterlife watching us—care at this point. Might Rock Hudson finally sigh in relief knowing that we like him anyway? That had he lived, he would have been able to marry the man he loved? Kate Hepburn might have delighted at Rachel Maddow's brilliance and Ellen Degeneres' humor and humanity on display.

The answer to "who cares?" is gays, lesbians, bisexuals, queers and transpersons care. The truth cares. History cares. We're sorry not sorry that some of your fantasies are blown—but the greater good is thet finally, in death, these stars can be their authentic selves. It's a small price for straight people to pay, it seems. And, after all, you still have *Audrey* Hepburn, as well as thousands of other stars on your "team." You'll be fine.

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

Like a Phoenix From the Ashes

BY MATT COKER

Eighth Grade. Standup comic Bo Burnham's writing and directing feature debut is about an introverted girl (Elsie Fisher) trying to survive her disastrous eighth grade year before she is off to high school. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, 25471 Rancho Niguel Rd., Laguna Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Thurs., Aug 16, 11:50 a.m., 2:10, 4:30, 6:55 & 9:10 p.m. $9.50-$12.50; Art Theatre, 2025 E. Fourth St., Long Beach, (562) 438-5435. Thurs., Aug. 16, 2, 4:15 & 9 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Scotty and the Secret History of Hollywood. Matt Tyrnauer's documentary is based on the best-selling memoir of Scott Bowers, a sexual procurer to Hollywood stars and, until now, an unsung legend. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Thurs., Aug. 16, noon, 2:30, 5, 7:20 & 9:40 p.m. $9.50-$12.50.*

BlacKkKlansman. Directed by Spike Lee, produced by Jordan Peele and based on a true story, the film is set in the early 1970s, when a black Colorado Springs police detective (John David Washington) tries to make a name for himself by infiltrating the Ku Klux Klan. But he must recruit a white partner (Adam Driver) to take down a KKK that is simultaneously trying to—*ahem*—whitewash its hateful reputation. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Thurs., Aug. 16, 12:45, 3:45, 6:45 & 9:45 p.m. $8.50-$12.50, also at Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Opens Fri., call theater for show times and ticket prices.*

Leave No Trace. Writer/director Debra Granik (*Winter's Bone, Down to the Bone*) has a small mistake forever derailing the lives of a father (Ben Foster) and his 13-year old daughter (Thomasin McKenzie). Until then, their existence had been ideal in a vast urban park in Portland, Oregon. *Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446. Thurs., Aug. 16, 2:15 & 7:05 p.m. $9.50-$12.50, also at Art Theatre, (562) 438-5435. Thurs., Aug. 16, 6:30 p.m. $8.50-$11.50.*

Jezebel. The first film to play at the Lido Theatre is back to help celebrate the historic Newport Beach movie house's 90th anniversary. Bette Davis, who lived in Corona del Mar in 1938, is said to have driven past the theater daily while it was under construction and convinced the owners to not only open with her new movie, *Jezebel*, but also to install a sitting parlor in the ladies room, which remains to this day. In one of her most renowned roles, she plays an impetuous Southern belle who drives away her successful banker fiance (Henry Fonda). He eventually returns, but perhaps too late for her to win him back. The screening, which opens with a champagne reception, benefits Lupus International. *Regency Lido Theater, 3459 Via Lido, Newport Beach, bit.ly/2NSlewZ. Thurs., Aug. 16, 6 p.m. $20.*

Elvis '68 Comeback Special. It's a 50th-anniversary screening of the television special that had Elvis Presley performing before a live audience for the first time in years, relaunching his career. A making-of feature is included in the screening event. *AMC Orange 30 at the Outlets, 20 City Blvd. W., Orange, (714) 769-4288; AMC Tustin Legacy at the District, 2457 Park Ave., Tustin, (714) 258-7036; Cinemark Century Stadium 25, 1701 W. Katella Ave., Orange, (714) 532-9558; Cinemark Century 20 Huntington Beach, 7777 Edinger Ave., Huntington Beach, (800) 967-1932; Cinemark at the Pike Theaters, 99 S. Pine Ave., Long Beach, (562) 435-5754 (Mon. only); Edwards Aliso Viejo Stadium 20, 26701 Aliso Creek Rd., Aliso Viejo, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Big Newport 6, 300 Newport Center Dr., Newport Beach, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Brea Stadium West 10, 255 W. Birch St., Brea, (714) 672-4136; Edwards Irvine Spectrum 21, 65 Fortune Dr., Irvine, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Long Beach Stadium 26, 7501 E. Carson, Long Beach, (844) 462-7342; Regal Garden Grove Stadium 16, 9741 Chapman Ave., Garden Grove, (844) 462-7342; www.fathomevents.com. Thurs., Aug. 16 and Mon., 7:30 p.m. $15.*

Casablanca. To celebrate the history of movie-making at Crystal Cove State Park, Crystal Cove Conservancy shows movies on the beach this summer, such as Michael Curtiz's 1942 masterpiece. American expatriate Rick Blaine (Humphrey Bogart) puts his past behind him by running a gin joint in Morocco during the beginning of World War II. Then his former lover Ilsa (Ingrid Bergman), who'd left him waiting for her at a Paris train station one day before war broke out, walks into his nightclub and everything goes to *merde*. *Crystal Cove State Park, "Beaches" Film & Media Center (historic Cottage No. 13), 8471 N. Coast Hwy., Laguna Beach, (949) 497-7647. Thurs., Aug. 16, 8 p.m. Free, but there is a $15 day use fee for parking in the inland lot at PCH and Los Trancos and then walking or taking a shuttle across the street.*

Miami Connection. The Bombs Away podcast, which originates from inside Frida's projection room, takes over the stage with a live recording of the film-skewering show and a screening of the 1987 B-movie. Martial arts pop/synth band Dragon Sound goes up against motorcycle ninjas with a tight grip on Florida's drug trade in the action flick. Besides seeing it and hearing the podcast, you can pose on stage with a Dragon Sound cutout, compete in a costume contest, reach into a mailbox to hopefully "find your father" and either purchase or try to win a commemorative T-shirt, collectors cup or other prizes. *The Frida Cinema, 305 E. Fourth St., Santa Ana, thefridacinema.org. Thurs., Aug. 16, 8 p.m. $15.*

MARVEL STUDIOS

Puzzle. In Marc Turtletaub's new drama, Kelly Macdonald (*Boardwalk Empire, No Country for Old Men*) plays Agnes, who reached her 40s sheltered from most of the outside world first by her widowed father, then by her domineering husband (David Denman) and two sons. After receiving a puzzle as a birthday gift, Agnes becomes such a whiz at putting it and other puzzles together that she gets recruited by a wealthy inventor (Irrfan Khan) to be his partner in the world jigsaw tournament. The journey there opens Agnes' eyes to what she has missed her whole life. *AMC Orange 30 at the Outlets, (714) 769-4288; Cinemark Century Stadium 25, (714) 532-9558; Cinemark Century 20 Huntington Beach, (714) 373-4573; Directors Cut Cinema at Regency Rancho Niguel, (949) 831-0446; Edwards Brea Stadium West 10, (714) 672-4136; The Lot Fashion Island, 999 Newport Center Dr., Newport Beach, (949) 281-0069; Edwards Foothill Towne Center Stadium 22, 26602 Towne Center Dr., Foothill Ranch, (949) 588-9402; Edwards Irvine Spectrum 21, (844) 462-7342; Edwards Long Beach Stadium 26, (844) 462-7342; Regency South Coast Village, 1561 W. Sunflower Ave., Santa Ana, (714) 557-5701; UA Long Beach 6, 6601 Pacific Coast Hwy., Long Beach, (844) 462-7342. Opens Fri., call theaters for show times and ticket prices.*

Dune. The Directors series tribute to David Lynch continues with his 1984 adaptation of Frank Herbert's epic saga that is set in the 11th millennium, when a galactic emperor (José Ferrer) sends a family (Jürgen Prochnow, Francesca Annis and Kyle MacLachlan) on an errand to a desert planet. But the family was actually set up for a cruel trap that the son survives before exacting his revenge. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 1, 4, 7 & 10 p.m., Sat., 4 & 7 p.m. $7-$10.*

Cowboy Bebop: The Movie. Funimation Films celebrates the 20th anniversary of its anime sensation with a big screen rerelease that is presented in Japanese with English subtitles. The spaceship Bebop's bounty-hunter crew seeks a 300 million woo long reward by catching the terrorists responsible for unleashing a deadly virus on the Mars populace in 2071. *The Frida Cinema, thefridacinema.org. Fri., 2:30, 5:30 & 8 p.m., Sun., 2:30 & 7:30 p.m. $7-$10.*

Zootopia. Yet another recent toon with funny people voicing animals (or is it vice versa?). A rabbit cop tries to solve a missing persons case in a city inhabited by anthropomorphic animals (Foothill Ranch?). *Los Alamos Park, 17901 Los Alamos St., Fountain Valley; www.fountainvalley.org/356/Special-Events. Fri., 6 p.m. Free.*

Avengers: Infinity War. The Avengers—Captain America (Chris Evans), Black Widow (Scarlett Johansson), Iron Man (Robert Downey Jr.), Thor (Chris Hemsworth), Hulk (Mark Ruffalo), et al—sacrifice everything to try to stop the powerful Thanos (Josh Brolin) from snuffing out the universe. Attendees of the Source OC's Outdoor Movie Night can capitalize on neighboring stores' and eateries' coupons and discounts, but movie seating is first-come, first-served. *The Source OC, 6940 Beach Blvd., Buena Park, (714) 521-8858; www.thesourceoc.com. Fri., 7 p.m. Free.*

The Secret Life of Pets. A 3D-animated tale about a terrier (voiced by Louis C.K., who could use a residual check about now) enjoying a comfortable life in New York until his owner adopts a giant and unruly canine, and both pooches wind up in a truck bound for the pound. Bring chairs and blankets, but keep dogs leashed and leave the booze at home. *Grand Park, 6101 City Lights Dr., Aliso Viejo, (949) 243-7750. Fri., 7:30 p.m. Free.*

MCOKER@OCWEEKLY.COM

Cloudy With a Chance of Showers

Fourth Element Gallery's 'Florabau' is an oblique, eerie rumination on California's current eco-nightmare

BY DAVE BARTON

It isn't always clear what Jane Bauman's intent is in the current exhibition of some of her recent work at Fourth Element Gallery in Santa Ana. The painter has been working her craft for enough years that you can be sure that it's there, so plan on spending some time with the work to parse what that intent may be. Titled "Florabau"—a play on *flora* and the first syllable of the artist's last name (*bau* is German for a building or construction site)—the constructed, mixed media canvases thankfully don't fall back on flowers as tired abstractions of vaginas. Instead, there's a mix of the ecological, the esoteric, and knowing the artist, politics, in her deceptively simple work. Using flowers and rain as symbols of hope renewed, they're an oblique address of California's current drought, the ensuing floods that follow the devastation of wildfires, and an examination of water as an "invaluable resource."

I confess that the only way I know any of this is because curator Laura Black told me. Such big themes aren't obvious and Black hasn't included either the titles of the work or any accompanying curatorial process notes. She's affable, informed, and available during business hours, so first rule of thumb is to hit her up with questions if you get confused. Second, do yourself a favor and pick up the price sheet folder from the counter. The sheet lists each piece's title, making the work much less confusing, supplying thoughtful clues on what you might be looking at. By leaving out that info, Black creates an initial disconnect for the viewer, and while I saw what she described after she explained the work, initially all I saw was pretty flowers.

Those photographic images of daisies—mostly pink, some yellow or white—are made into photographic transfers, and then applied to aluminum on a wood background. The metal—recycled discarded lithography plates—is occasionally added on top of the picture, breaking up or cropping the image. The dull silver bounces available light sources or the colors already in the picture (*Sweet Rain*, 2018), with delicate rainbows, depending on where you're standing. All of the images also have painted streaks of sharp, pin-thin sheets of rain stabbing into the florets from above (*Heat Wave*, 2018), or blue lighting erupting into a series of jagged bolts as they tango from petal to petal (*Wet*, 2016).

Hope shines in Bauman's carefully-applied shotgun-blasted blue blanket of

COURTESY OF FOURTH ELEMENT GALLERY

perfect circles in two of her canvases. Simultaneously obscuring, corralling and highlighting the images underneath, her more specifically abstracted raindrops offer a Pop representation of nature. *Big Daisy Soak*, the largest of the pieces, fills your field of vision if you move in close enough to see the familiar daisies beneath, bedazzled with a green luminescence. In *Deluge at 29 Palms*, you have to do the opposite and take several steps back to see its negative image of a Joshua Tree desert, the area around its palms and shacks as bright as an inferno raging out of control. The circles of image surrounded by blue highlight both the rain and its absence, creating an atmosphere that, quoting from Joanna Roche's introduction to the show catalog, makes you "[yearn] for that sound that invokes rain."

Bauman's series of black and white grid images, the canvas vista broken into two and sometimes four sections, feel less hopeful, and more about statements of mourning and loss. A single painted blue flower slips from one blurry frame to another that's been stripped of color (*Fallen Flower*, 2016); several blossoms tumble like chips of flaking paint over four shots of Rococo ceiling art in another (*Rain of Daisies*, 2016). Following the flowers to their logical final resting place off the canvas and onto the ground, these literal down-to-earth existential concerns seem more at the forefront than ecological unease. That soberness is reinforced by the punk Xerox feel of its h & w transfers, their photographed images degraded by being copied over and over, distressed until it sometimes becomes just outlines and suggestions of the original picture.

In her final trio, Bauman has inked Rorschach Tests on vellum and placed them over foggy gray photographs of some of the same gardens and art mentioned above. A bat, a face or two, insects, atoms… the artist leaves it up to you to decipher what they mean, though she's peppered the titles of each with more water references (*Fog in the Garden*, *Vapor Queen*, and *Dawn for the Water Babies*).

Rain as a symbol for washing away the sins of the world has long been a biblical trope, as well as a visual representation for tears. In a year when 3,981 California fires have burnt up over 629,531 acres *so far*—as the White House blames water diversion instead of the much more obvious climate change—a ceremonial invocation for something greater than ourselves to intervene can't hurt.

"JANE BAUMAN | FLORABAU" at Fourth Element Gallery, 210 N. Broadway Ave., Santa Ana, (657) 232-0002, www.facebook.com/4thelementgallery. Open Tues.-Sat., 11 a.m.-7 p.m.; Sun., 11 a.m.-5 p.m. Through Aug. 24. Free.

ARTSOVERLOAD

» AIMEE MURILLO

Aug. 17-23

***BLACK VEILS* BOOK SIGNING.** World-undead expert Father Sebastian signs his tome and provides a lecture on vampire culture for the curious. Thurs., Aug. 23, 7:30 p.m. $25.57. The Dragon & the Rose, 2424 N. Grand Ave., Ste. K, Santa Ana, (714) 569-0130, thedragonandtherose.com.

"ENDLESS POSSIBILITIES". A group show in which artists present their favorite pieces in any medium. Open Sun.-Wed., 10:30 a.m.-6 p.m., Thurs.-Sat., 11 a.m.-8 p.m. Through Aug. 30. Free. Laguna Art Gallery, 577 S. Coast Hwy., Ste. A-1, Laguna Beach, (949) 667-1803, www.lagunagallery.com.

FESTIVAL KUNWAY FASHION SHOW. Featured artists in the Festival of Arts present couture pieces made from recycled, reclaimed or ransed materials. Sun., noon-3 p.m. Free with festival admission ($5-$15); reserved seating, $25. Festival of Arts, 650 Laguna Canyon Rd., Laguna Beach, (949) 494-1145, www.foapom.com.

HOW TO WRITE A SKETCH (AND WHY YOU SHOULD DO IT). Improv pro Fernanda Ennes leads a workshop on how to write a comedic skit. The event is hosted by Breath of Fire Latina Theater Ensemble. Sun., 11 a.m. RSVP required. Grand Central Art Center, 125 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 567-7233, www.breathoffire.org.

KIM ZUMPFE, "OUTSIDE THE LENGTH OF A KOOM [OR] DIVING INTO THE BLUE SUN". A site-specific installation that examines the concept of safe spaces in figurative and literal terms. Open Tues.-Thurs., 11 a.m.-4 p.m., Fri.-Sat., 11 a.m.-5 p.m., Sun., 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Through Sept. 9. Free. Grand Central Art Center, 125 N. Broadway, Santa Ana, (714) 567-7233, www.grandcentralartcenter.com.

***LOVING VINCENT* SCREENING AND Q&A.** After a screening of the critically acclaimed film, stay for a Q&A with the artists who worked on it. Sat., 6:30 p.m. $10 (limited seating available). Catalyst Art Studio, 8630 Westminster Blvd., Westminster, (714) 891-3626, www.artsupplywarehouse.com/catalyst.php.

OLD TOWNE ORANGE GHOST WALK. A tour of some of Orange County's supposedly haunted spaces. Follow along if you dare! Fri., 8 p.m. $23. Starts at Royal Mansion, 307 E. Chapman Ave., Orange. www.hauntedoc.com.

PUFF, PASS & PAINT. Participants are welcome to smoke weed and paint in a social, creative environment. Sat., 7:30 p.m. $35. 21+. Comic Book Hideout, 215 W. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (657) 217-0624, cannabistours.com.

OC WEEKLY Bulletin

Feature your photo here! ocweekly@ocweekly.com

Upcoming Events

SoCal World Guitar Show
Aug 18-19
Calling all guitar enthusiasts! SoCal World Guitar Show returns to the OC Fair & Event Center this weekend. Visit calshows.tv for more infoTickets at Eventbrite

Wright Records presents:
DJ SNOOPADELIC
aka Snoop Doggy Dogg
Saturday, August 18th, at Esports Arena 120 W 5th St. Santa Ana, CA 92701
Doors Open at 6PM 18+ | Valid ID ONLY
Tickets at EventBrite.com

Messages

Need your help to find Rowie & Bella a forever home!!! They are 10 weeks old siblings that have been fostered along with their mom since they were a week old. They are a loving, playful and healthy pair. They have been vaccinated, wormed, fixed and microchipped. Now all they need is a loving family of their own. Please contact Lorraine at Long Beach Spay and Neuter Foundation if interested in meeting these lovely kittens. (562)544-0335 or lbsn2006@yahoo.com

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Piercing the Barriers

At Feedback Fest, the spirit of inclusivity is a breath of fresh ear

BY NATE JACKSON

CHRISTINE FREISS

Whether it's onstage at a bar in OC or at a biker fest in South Dakota, Well Hung Heart are used to standing out, or in most cases, not fitting in. Over the years, the skill of embracing their rock oddity has become a way of life.

"We get told we're not heavy enough, we're too heavy, we're too punky or whatever," says blue-haired front woman Greta Valenti. "Nothing against any bands that fit into a genre bracket, but there's a lot of stuff out there that doesn't."

Now that rock is more marginalized than ever, the time for inclusiveness and diversity is now. That's exactly why the return of Feedback Fest, an event Valenti and her husband/guitarist Robin Davey started in 2016, is designed to give rock fans a breath of fresh ear.

"When we started Feedback Fest in 2016, there were a few rock acts around, there was still mostly a lot of indie stuff going on," Valenti says. "Now, I feel like even over the past few years there's so many acts that play rock music and so many diverse acts that I feel like people don't get to see or aren't included in most rock festivals."

It's definitely not that way everywhere, especially for females. Last month the band was on tour at the Buffalo Chip Festival in Sturgis, South Dakota, one of the largest events of its kind in the U.S. Now on their fifth trip to biker country, they've earned themselves a rep for being among the hardest rocking West Coast representatives of the festival, which earned them a slot on the mainstage this year opening for Foreigner. Still, Valenti and bassist Danielle "Chip" Lehman had to deal with occasional bouts of sexism.

"When we were backstage before playing the mainstage a woman came up to us and asked, 'Oh, are you girls dancers?' We're like, 'No, we're in the next band,'" Valenti says, taking the woman's boneheaded comment in stride. Changing people's perceptions about the limitations of rock music, whether it be gender, style or the message of the music was a major inspiration behind Feedback Fest.

"People are so into pigeonholing things but with this festival everyone can be involved. We wanted to have really diverse acts in one place because entertainment is entertainment," Davey says. "I feel also that rock music is making a resurgence, but it's so wide-reaching that we really wanted to show the depth of it."

From where we're standing, it seems to be a mission accomplished. This year the fest will be headlined by punk legend and Chicana feminist icon Alice Bag, who released her second album, *The Blueprint*, earlier this year. Aside from matching Valenti's blue-dyed haircut and boundless energy at age 59, Bag is also known for being punk's most approachable activist for feminine equality (evidenced in songs like her recent single "77," highlighting the wage gap between women and men).

Well Hung Heart also look forward to jamming wacky rockers Big Fun, the spaghetti western glam metal trio of Bella Novela, spooky hard rockers New Evil, and a DJ set from the Brit-rock McGarry twins also known as Pop Noir. The host slot is filled by the queen of rock oddities, the guitar shredding drag queen Mrs. Smith. The alter ego of David Hanbury is often billed as the world's most unlikely guitar shredder, but is equally adept at splitting sides with her brand of irreverent comedy. "She's like a cross between Dame Edna and Steve Vai," Davey says.

The common thread of the lineup this year is that it showcases the soul of locally booked festivals that aren't simply the product of streaming analytics or backroom deals with high-powered agents. In the nebulous world of internet and social media fame, it's hard to tell how many bands are simply the product of manufactured hype. For that reason Valenti and Davey, along with the Wayfarer's talent buyer Eric Keilman, were adamant about choosing bands they were genuinely excited about and that they knew could draw a crowd in real life.

"You find out more and more that these numbers that people are selling bands on aren't real and it's frustrating when you're working to build a legitimate audience," Davey says.

Well Hung Heart remember opening for plenty of bands that touted amazing streaming figures and a staggering amount of social media followers only to find out they couldn't deliver the goods in a live setting.

Aside from just booking bands they figured could draw a crowd, the local fest's commitment to keeping the spirit of inclusiveness at the forefront meant it had to go beyond numbers. It was also about making sure they could represent their genre with a wide spectrum of male, female and non gender conforming musicians. Santa Ana-based organization Queer Traffic, which provides chill, nomadic social spaces for the LGBTQ community, also signed on to be a part of Feedback Fest; they are just as welcome as big sponsors like KROQ, Jameson and Pabst Blue Ribbon who've been supporting the fest since it was announced.

"If people weren't as supportive as they have been it would just be another show," says Valenti, whose band is a regular mainstay on KROQ host Kat Corbett's weekly show *Locals Only*. "But I think everyone's been super stoked on it."

More than the sound that's brought the band their success, Feedback Fest is a reflection of a notion they've subscribed to all along—persistence, originality and community are a band's greatest allies.

"We operate outside of the music industry and the festival circuit and built Well Hung Heart in an outlying sort of way," Davey says. "Going to places like Sturgis where we've played for five years, we went back again and again and now they put us on the mainstage. We just go on the audience reaction that we get. We've been to Sturgis five times and the audience reaction has always been amazing, but sometimes it was a tiny stage at midnight to 20 people."

Greta is quick to add that a few years ago, one of those people was the owner of Buffalo Chip. "We didn't even know he was watching us and he was like 'They're great; bring 'em back!' So stuff like that happens," she says.

Could the next great local rock band be discovered at an event like Feedback Fest? It's definitely not out of the question. As the future of festivals starts to veer towards smaller boutique style events, it's possible that the magic of fests like the now-defunct Warped Tour could be reborn in another grassroots style rager that's still waiting for its turn to explode. Of course that's the beauty of rock & roll, and why, despite the way the system is set up to tip the scales toward the establishment, the little guy is always out there, ready to make some noise. Even in the heat of summer festival season, Valenti and Davey know that what they've created is something special.

"There's so much going on and people are on vacation and stuff so hopefully it goes well," Valenti says. "But we won't know until that night, we'll see who shows up."

NJACKSON@OCWEEKLY.COM

FEEDBACK FEST
with Well Hung Heart, Alice Bag, Big Fun, New Evil, Bella Novela, Pop Noir (DJ Set) and Mrs. Smith, at the Wayfarer, 843W 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039, www.wayfarercm.com. Sat., 7 p.m. $12-$15. 21+

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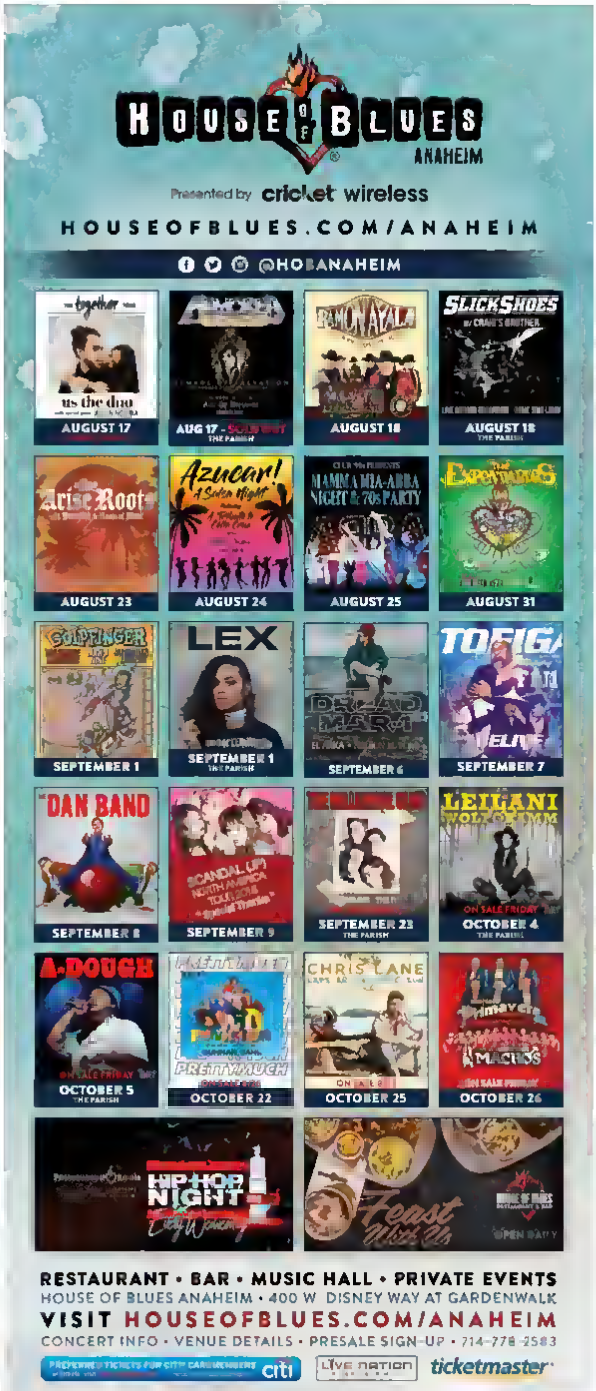

A Stream for His Dream

Mike Vitale's life hacks as a working musician are paying off

BY NATE JACKSON

No matter how big of a rock star any musician these days hopes to become, the biggest stage they'll ever play on is a cellphone.

On a recent Saturday afternoon, a video of Mike Vitale performing an hour-long set in his bedroom is garnering views from people across several continents. His breezy, soulful voice croons over an electric guitar and his loop station, while thousands of people across the world watch on the live streaming platform Periscope.

"I did a show last night and Periscoped it to 14,000 people and it's been working out good, I've been slowly building a fan base doing that," he says. His personal best so far is around 47,000 viewers—translating into figures that are finally starting to benefit him in the real world. Whether he's increasing his reach or communicating directly with fans who buy his records or crowdfund his cause, Vitale's strategy and skill are making his life as a struggling musician a little less of a struggle.

"Trying to do music professionally is kinda like a rat race to be honest with you, I have a lot of friends that have started thinking outside the box," he says.

Something he learned as the front man of the Hawklane Monster, his Fullerton-based band of rotating musicians, is that being at the center of a project often means you're the only person dedicated to seeing it through. After that project dissolved due to lack of time commitment from other members, he started recording under his own name again.

Fellow singer/songwriter Mike Barnett gave him some advice that stuck. "He said 'You're gonna work harder for yourself than you will for anyone else,'" Vitale remembers. "It took me a little while to wake up to that notion, and the older I'm getting the more I realize it and the more I wanna work."

These days, he's learned to work smarter thanks to social platforms to bring an intimate experience of his solo acoustic shows to as many people as possible whether he's playing in a small club or his bedroom.

"The show I did last night for example," he says as he pulls out his phone to pull up Periscope, "had 14,000 viewers. I was playing Parkers' Lighthouse in Long Beach last night and I just broadcasted it."

A LOCAL TALENT COMES TO LIGHT

NICK AGRO

Vitale says he prefers Periscope over Facebook Live and Instagram Live because the videos you create go into an automatic feed where people who follow you or follow certain hashtags will automatically be able to see his show in their feed. "You get a lot more strangers watching you," he says.

Part of capitalizing on those eyeballs is directing them to an easy way of supporting an artist they like. The crowd-funding platform Patreon, launched in 2013, acts like a monthly version of Kickstarter that allows fans of his work to contribute a few bucks towards him on a monthly basis in exchange for exclusive content. So far he's earning $300 a month, a godsend that's helped him to steadily complete video content and pay for recording and mixing albums like his latest, *Empty Circle*, and his most recent full-band single, "No Vacancy."

"[Patreon] made all the difference in the world," he says. Some people can contribute $20 a month and I'm thankful for those people, but the idea I started off with was contribute a buck a month and if you get a lot of people doing that it adds up."

Though he still longs to feel the rush of playing for a stadium of fans, the ability to do so through technology is a life hack that he hopes will get him there one day.

"I remember a time I saw Jay Buchanan [of Rival Sons] at the Gypsy Lounge; he was sad and talking down about his music career—look at him now," Vitale says of the Long Beach-bred-singer-turned rock star. "I wanna make a living playing music and I know it's possible to do it. I watch my friends do it and it's just been about them not giving up."

LETTERS@OCWEEKLY.COM

RAMON AYALA

COURTESY OF RAMON AYALA

Friday

ARMOREO SAINT PERFORMING "SYMBOL OF SALVATION" IN ITS ENTIRETY 7 p.m., $25; all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeeWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

THE 8-SHARPS OC RELEASE PARTY, WITH GHETTO ON PHYRE, THE SOVEREIGN ARTIST, MISBREWED 8 p.m., free; 21+. The Slidebar Rock N Roll Kitchee, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com.

DJ OUIK 8 p.m., $25; all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

WES BRAWLER, ROONEY MOON & THE LITTLE OIPPERS 8 p.m., $5; 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com

Saturday

ROW WOW WOW, WHEN IN ROME 11 a.m., $10; 21+. The Slidebar Rock N Roll Kitchee, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com

FEEORACK FEST, WITH WELL HUNG HEART, ALICE RAG, BIG FUN, NEW EVIL, BELLA NOVELA, POP NOIR (DJ SET), MRS SMITH 8 p.m., $12; $15; 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com

RAMON AYALA 8 p.m., $50-$60; all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardenWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

SLICK SHOES RECORDING A LIVE ALBUM, WITH CRAIG S BROTHER 7 p.m., $16; all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeeWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim.

THE LAST PODCAST ON THE LEFT 8 p.m., $30-$130; all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

LIL UGLY MANE 5 p.m., $20; all ages. The Locker Room at Gardee Amp, 12762 Main St., Gardee Grove, (949) 415-8544; gardeeamp.com.

Sunday

GEER MEET 8 p.m., free; 21+. The Slidebar Rock-N-Roll Kitchen, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com

WET HOT SKAMERICAN SUMMER 3 p.m., $15; all ages. Gardee Amp, 12762 Main St., Garden Grove, (949) 415-8544; gardeeamp.com.

Monday

TARERS LEAVERS THE RLACR HANO, THE RANO ICE CREAM 8 p.m., free; 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

Tuesday

CHAD VALLEY, SO MUCH LIGHT, MISSING WORDS 8 p.m., $10; all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com

MOTHER SOUNO, THE MIRAGETHEORY, CHANNELS, THE ENO OF AN AGE 8 p.m., free; 21+. The Slidebar Rock N Roll Kitchee, 122 E. Commonwealth Ave., Fullerton, (714) 871-7469; www.slidebarfullerton.com

RJ 8 p.m., $30; all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

X 9 p.m., $40; 21+. Marty's On Newport, 1401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

Wednesday

RATASTRO, TYRONE S JACRET, ALOHA RADIO 9 p.m., $10-$12; all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

SAHRAR11 8 p.m., $10; all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

X 9 p.m., $40; 21+. Marty's On Newport, 1401 Newport Ave., Tustin, (714) 544-1995; www.martysonnewport.com.

Thursday, Aug. 23

ARISE ROOTS, RREWFISH 7 p.m., $17.50; all ages. House of Blues at Anaheim GardeeWalk, 400 W. Disney Way, Anaheim, (714) 778-2583; www.houseofblues.com/anaheim

IDONTRNOWJEFFREY; BANR ROLL RICO 9 p.m., $10-$30; all ages. The Constellation Room, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

MURA MASA, EMPRESS OF 8 p.m., $34.50; all ages. The Observatory, 3503 S. Harbor Blvd., Santa Ana, (714) 957-0600; www.observatoryoc.com.

MYSTIC BRAVES, THE CREATION FACTORY; PESOS 9 p.m., $15; 21+. The Wayfarer, 843 W. 19th St., Costa Mesa, (949) 764-0039; www.wayfarercm.com.

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Secret Perving

I've been enjoying consensual nonmonogamy for the past two years, in part thanks to your column and podcast. I have a delightful young lover, and our connection has evolved into a kind of Master/slave relationship. I "allow" her to fuck other men and women, and she delights in asking my permission and recounting the details of her other trysts to me. We are curious how much of this she needs to disclose to her other lovers. They know she isn't monogamous and they are aware of her relationship with me, but so far she has chosen not to tell them the extent to which I "own" her and have jurisdiction over her body and actions. Of course, it's just an elaborate role-playing game—but is it wrong to be using these people as pawns in our game without their knowledge and consent? If so, when should she tell them? Before she sleeps with them even once? Or after she's developed a more intimate rapport with them? There's a perverse thrill in her other lovers being totally oblivious to it, but we want to be ethical in our polyamorous ways.
Masochists And Sadists Tackling Ethical Relations

This falls under the heading of permissible secret perving (PSP). MASTER, and I will allow it—with one caveat.

My go-to example of PSP is the foot fetishist who works in a shoe store. So long as he's good at his job *and* his secret perving is undetectable—no bulges, no heavy breathing, no creepy comments—no harm done. And if he goes home and jacks off about all the sexy, sexy feet he saw and, yes, handled during his shift, he's not hurting anyone or doing anything unethical. It's important, however, to note that the foot fetishist salesclerk's perceptions aren't the ones that matter. If he thinks he's playing it cool—he thinks his perving is secret—but his customers or coworkers are creeped out by his behavior, demeanor, heavy breathing, etc., then his perving isn't secret and is therefore impermissible.

The secret perving you're doing—the girlfriend has to beg for your permission to fuck other people and report back to you afterward—is smelly and it's a bank shot. The other people she's fucking provide mental fodder for your D/s role-playing games. MASTER, you aren't directly involving them. Your role-playing games take place before she fucks someone else (when she asks your permission) and after she fucks someone else (when she recounts her experience). And what turns you on about your girlfriend sleeping with other people—and how you and your girlfriend talk to each other about it—is no one's business but yours.

Now for the caveat: If one of your girlfriend's lovers strongly objects to Dom/sub sex, relationships or role-playing games, *and* your girlfriend is aware they object, *and* you two want to be exquisitely ethical, MASTER, then either your girlfriend shouldn't fuck that person or she should disclose your Master/slave dynamics to that person and allow them to decide whether they want to fuck her anyway.

Zooming out for a second. Some people in open relationships don't want to know what their partners get up to, and these couples usually have "don't ask, don't tell" agreements about sex outside the relationship. But many more people in open relationships *do* want to hear about their partners' adventures *because it turns them on.* Someone who doesn't want to risk being fodder for a couple's dirty talk or even their D/s role-playing games shouldn't be sleeping with people who are partnered and in open relationships. There are things we have a right to ask the people with whom we have casual sex—like whether they're practicing ethical nonmonogamy if they have an STI, what kind of birth control they're using, whether they're on PrEP, etc.—but a casual fuck isn't entitled to details about your relationship.

My boyfriend of two years has refused to delete photos from his Instagram account that show him with his ex-girlfriend. They were together for three years and briefly engaged, and they broke up two years before we met. They aren't in contact in any way, so I don't have any worries there, but I think making photos of him with someone else available to his friends and family—and now my friends, too, as many are now following him—is incredibly disrespectful. We've had numerous arguments about this, and his "solution" is for me to "stop thinking about it." He also insists that no one is looking at five-year-old pictures on his Instagram account. If that's true, why not delete them? He refuses to discuss this issue, even as I lose sleep over it. I've tried calmly discussing this with him, I've tried crying, I've tried screaming, my head off—nothing works.
Personal Insult Causing Stress

There's definitely something your boyfriend should delete, PICS, but it's not old photos of his ex.

The man I'm going to marry has a huge boot fetish. He has about 200 pairs of boots in his size. His size also happens to be my size—and I'm half convinced he wouldn't have proposed if we didn't have the same size feet and I couldn't wear his boots. I want to surprise him with a very special bachelor party (that we'll both attend). It would be all guys with the same size feet as us, and everyone will be wearing different pairs of boots from his collection. I'm picturing a big group of guys doing for him what I do for him: stand on him, let him fuck my (actually, his) boots, make him crawl and grovel. His feet aren't an uncommon size (11.5), and I'm guessing enough of our mutual friends would fit into his boots that I could actually make this happen. He's the only fetishist I've ever been with—all my other boyfriends were vanilla—and I'm wondering how he would react if he walked into a room and found a bunch of his friends wearing his boots and then I ordered him to start licking. I think it would be way better than going to a strip club or a drag show.
Boyfriend Obsesses Over Tall Shoes
P.S. He's not really "out" about his kink.

Wow. BOOTS. you saved the most salient detail for that postscript: *Your boyfriend isn't out to his friends about his kink.* So unless you're talking about a small subset of his friends—only old friends that once had benefits—*do not out your boyfriend as a boot fetishist to all his friends with size 11.5 feet.* If your fiancé has fantasized about some sort of group boot-worshipping session, and he's shared that fantasy with you, and you want to help him realize it, that's great. But he needs to be involved in determining where, when, how, and with whom he'd like to make this fantasy a reality.

My girlfriend and I are getting married in a month. We're in a cuckold relationship—she sleeps with other men and women, while I am completely monogamous to her—and "my" friend is one of her regular male sex partners and has maid of honor is one her girlfriends-with-benefits. No one else at our big traditional church wedding (that her mother is paying for) will know. But I wanted to let you know. Dan, since reading your column is what inspired me to be open about my kinks, and our relationship—the best I've ever been in—wouldn't exist without you.
The Happy Couple

Permissible secret perving at its finest/hottest, THC. Thanks for sharing, and be sure to send me a photo of the wedding party for my records.

On the Lovecast (savagelovecast.com), a sex toy expert's husband's favorite sex toy. Contact Dan via mail@savagelove.net, follow him on Twitter @fakedansavage, and visit ITMFA.org.

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TOKE OF THE WEEK

» MARY CARREON

The Hippie by Venice Cookie Co.

Most edibles are loaded with sugar, gluten, animal products and preservatives, making them not an option for people who are health-conscious. That's why edible manufacturers such as the Venice Cookie Co. are so important to the cannabis industry. The Venice Cookie Co. takes the dietary needs of those who are mindful of their health into consideration in producing such canna-products as its "Hippie" cookie.

Made with trail mix, granola and oats, this vegan delight emanates transcendent tree-hugging vibes—and we mean that literally. With one 10-milligram cookie, we got lost staring at the roots of the trees in Mile Square Park and nearly cried because it occurred to us that trees are the wisest of the plants in the plant kingdom and most definitely deserve a hug.

The mix of peanut butter almonds, cashews and dried cherries in these healthy, delectable edibles add a rich, tart essence that Reese's wishes it incorporated into its cups. It's a good thing these little cookies carry a low dose because it's easy to eat three or four in one sitting. They taste like the food version of a nutty forest during the fall. For an unbelievable pairing experience, dip them in a latte.

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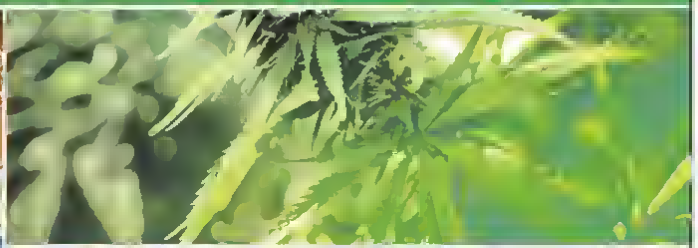
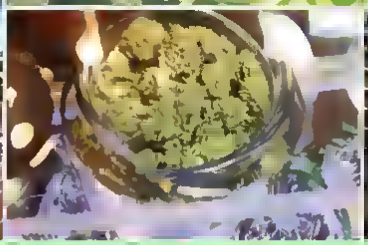

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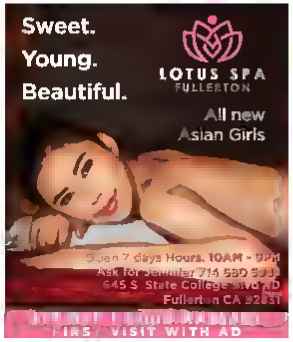
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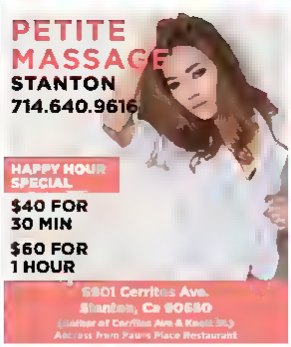
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Legends of Laguna

A sanctuary of old California art closes after 20 years

BY MARY CARREON

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Lost amid the industrial buildings and automotive businesses that line Artesia Boulevard in Bellflower is a preserved California and Western America art sanctuary. Inside, the aroma of old books, natural musk (not the stuff modern-day hippies wear) creates a familiar feeling of *home*. Wood panels hug the walls while tan shag carpet cushions your feet. Paintings dating back to 1885 of Yosemite Valley, the Grand Canyon and Native American life are scattered around the room. There isn't enough wall space for them.

De McCall, the owner of **DeRu's Fine Art**, has sold historic paintings out of the gallery location in Bellflower since 1969. But when the surrounding area began to shift to a manufacturing locale, he knew for the advancement of his collection he had to open a studio in an art-friendly community. In January 1997, McCall opened a showroom in Laguna Beach on the corner of South Pacific Coast Highway and Bluebird Canyon. Ever since, the nook of a showroom has exhibited art unlike the rest that's sold in Laguna. "We offer historical art," says McCall. "The paintings are all by the artists that started the Laguna Beach Art Association and museum in 1918."

DeRu's has been a staple in Laguna Beach for the past 20 years. The only other spot in the area that showcases artists such as **Edgar Payne** and **Anna Hills** is the **Laguna Beach Art Museum**. But those pieces aren't for sale. And, sadly, the museum will soon be the only place in the beach town highlighting this kind of art. Earlier this month, McCall announced the closing of the Laguna location. "The internet has changed everything," says McCall. "Auction has taken over the [art] business."

By the day, more and more people are buying art through auction because it can be done online, McCall explains. Similar to journalism and the fall of newspapers, the internet has also impacted the art world. "People don't get out and go to galleries anymore, which can be risky when buying art. We see a lot of fakes and forgeries that people bring in and say they bought online."

Prices have become soft and are going down in the age of the internet, according to McCall. As a result, people don't think art is a good investment anymore. And, perhaps, in some cases they're right. But historical art will forever be different because it holds more depth. It's a representation and image of our past. In fact, a lot of modern artists replicate the past because of how potent, classic, nostalgic and difficult things were then. The era—which obviously didn't have iPhones or computers—had an authentic character that made it pure in essence. The same can hardly be said about the world in which we currently live.

"[The artists] recorded the time as it was in their paintings," says McCall. "It's a direct reflection of their era. Today, a lot of artists paint out of time and era—they paint about Indians and early days, etcetera. But the late 19th- and early 20th-century artists were recording the way it looked then and what was happening."

McCall explains that the artists featured in his gallery lived through the Great Depression and World War II. He also tells us about life in OC back in 1918, when Laguna became a destination for artists. People had to take a train into Santa Ana, and then take a stagecoach to Laguna. Nothing about life was easy for these wildly gifted folk, which, in part, adds to the depth of these Plein Air treasures.

Part of DeRu's allure is McCall's gift for restoring old paintings. In fact, it's his superpower. He shows us a majestic painting of the Grand Canyon made in 1904 that he found during an antiquing excursion, it was dirty, varnished, ripped and in grim condition. "I always felt I had a little advantage over the average art collector because I can look at a dirty painting and know what I could do to it to bring it back to life."

The painting of the Grand Canyon looks like it has age, but you'd never guess it was thrashed at one point. McCall's drive to save pieces of our history from being thrown out will live on even after DeRu's closes in the next couple of months. He's going to do all the art restoration for the **Irvine Museum** that's currently on Von Karman. Soon, however, that museum will be taken over and moved to **UC Irvine**, where they're going to build an art museum, research and restoration center, according to McCall.

"I have a lot of art reference books that I've collected over the years," says McCall. "I'm going to give some to the museum and sell them some, and help them put together an art research library. You can go online and find out a lot about known artists of the past but the books still have hidden information you can still only get in books, and find out more details about the artist. That's what research is."

Books are another aspect of DeRu's that adds a certain air of comfort to the gallery. They line nearly every flat surface in the Laguna and Bellflower galleries. McCall shows us a book of Payne's work, and reveals he was friends with the Payne family. When Payne's daughter, **Evelyn Payne Hatcher**, died at 93 years old, she left McCall the rights to the book, and has helped keep the Payne's art legacy alive, the book's currently in its seventh printing.

McCall tells of a couple, **Rena and Ed Coen** from Minneapolis, who were friends with the Payne family. Rena and Ed gave birth to **Joel Coen** and **Ethan Coen**, better known as the **Coen Brothers**, the brilliant brother filmmakers of our time. "Rena worked with Evelyn," says McCall. "They were college professors and close friends. Ed Coen was from England. I can see where the two brothers got their ability for producing movies. Both parents were college professors and writers. They were very smart—and funny, too."

Although DeRu's in Laguna is closing—and selling everything from books to furniture to original paintings for 25 percent off—the location in Bellflower will be open until all the art and books are sold. After that, you'll be able to find McCall's extraordinary collection in the Irvine Museum and the homes of the clientele he's built up over the past 50 years.

"Paintings don't just offer monetary value," says McCall. "I've had clients tell me that at the end of the day they look at their landscape paintings and feel relaxed, like they've escaped all of the bad things of the world. There's great value in feeling—sometimes more than what the value of the art is."

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